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HARVARD
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COMMENTARIES
ON
EQUITY JURISPRUDENCE,
AS ADMINISTERED IN
ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

By JOSEPH STORY, LL.D.

TENTH EDITION,
CAREFULLY REVISED, WITH EXTENSIVE ADDITIONS,
By ISAAC F. REDFIELD, LL.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

BOSTON:
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.
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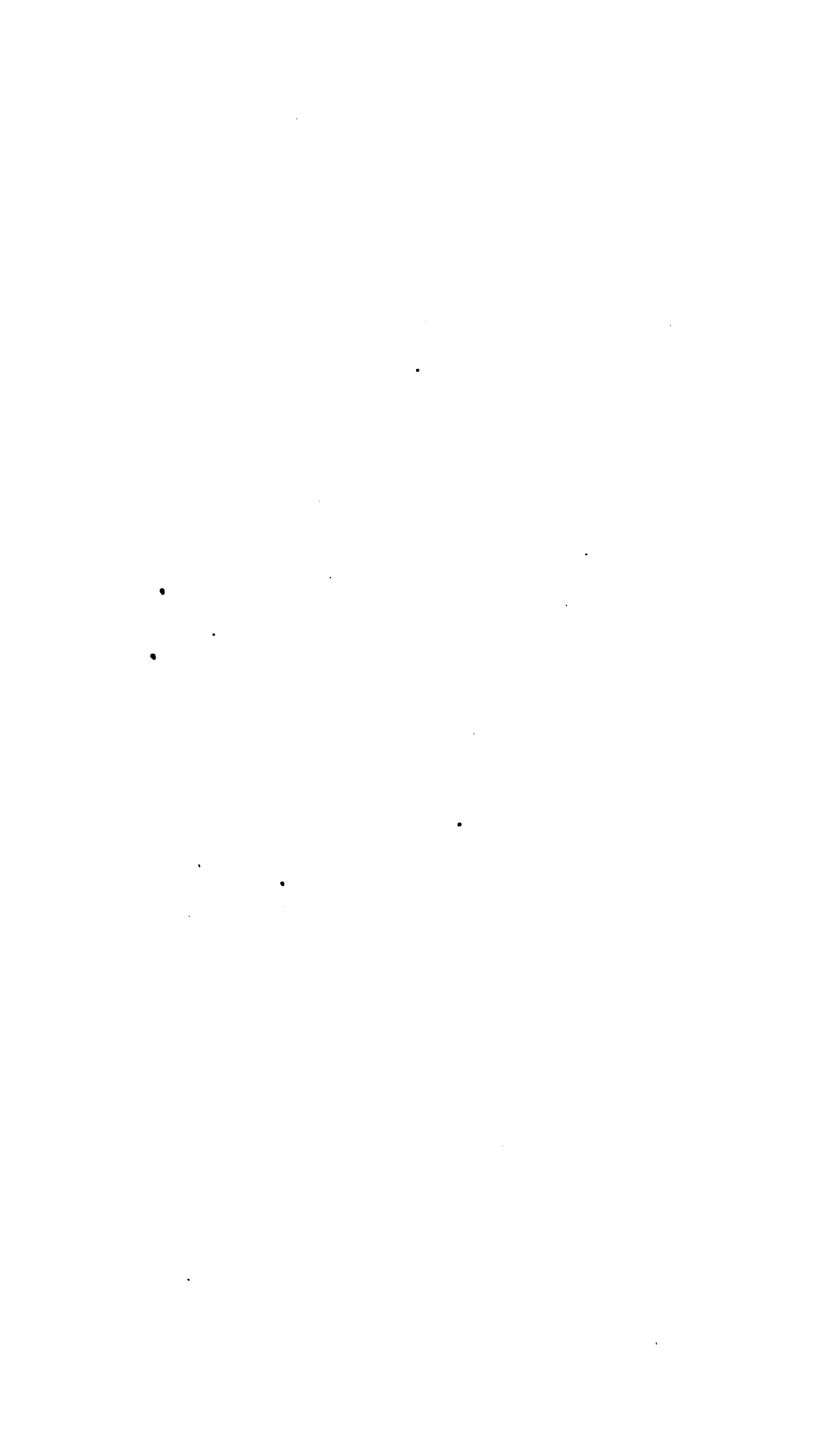
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TO THE TENTH EDITION.

THE work has been brought down to the time of publication in the same thorough and careful manner as in the two preceding editions. About one hundred new sections have been added to the text, and nearly five hundred cases in the notes, decided, mostly, since the date of the last edition. We feel confident the additions since the last edition will be of great value to the profession. All the additions of the present editor are indicated in the same manner as in the eighth edition.

I. F. R.

Boston, June 1, 1870.



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TO THE EIGHTH EDITION.

THIS edition has been prepared with much care and study. And although it certainly does not come up to the editor's wishes that it should contain every thing which the profession might desire in such a work, which would be quite impracticable in a treatise upon so extensive a subject: it is still hoped that, with the addition of more than two hundred new sections, and extensive notes, referring to more than one thousand new and important cases, and bringing the decisions of the English courts of equity down to the latest moment, almost to the very day of publication; together with a carefully prepared analysis preceding every chapter, it will be regarded by the profession, as an acceptable addition to the existing facilities for acquiring reliable information upon the present state of equity jurisprudence. Most of the additions to the present edition are indicated by [*]. The editor asks the same indulgence in regard to this, which the profession have so long extended towards his other imperfect efforts on their behalf.

I. F. R.

BOSTON, June 1, 1861.



TO THE HONORABLE
WILLIAM PRESCOTT, LL. D.

SIR,

It affords me sincere gratification to be allowed to dedicate this work to you, upon your retirement from the Bar, of which you have been so long a distinguished ornament. More than one-third of a century has elapsed, since, upon my first admission to practice, I had the honor of forming an acquaintance with you, which has ripened into a degree of friendship of which I may be truly proud. It has been my good fortune, through the whole intermediate period, to have been a witness of your professional labors, — labors equally remarkable for the eminent ability, untiring research, profound learning, and unsullied dignity, with which they were accompanied. They have brought with them the just reward due to a life of consistent principles, and public spirit, and private virtue, in the universal confidence and respect which have followed you in your retreat from the active scenes of business. This is a silent but expressive praise, whose true value is not easily over-estimated. I trust, that you may live many years to enjoy it, for the reason so finely touched by one of the great Jurists of Antiquity: *Quia Conscientia bene actæ vitæ, multorumque benefactorum Recordatio jucundissima est.*

JOSEPH STORY.

CAMBRIDGE, December, 1835.

P R E F A C E.

THE present work embraces another portion of the labors, devolved upon me by the Founder of the Dane Professorship of Law in Harvard University. In submitting it to the Profession, it is impossible for me not to feel great diffidence and solicitude, as to its merits, as well as to its reception by the public. The subject is one of such vast variety and extent that it would seem to require a long life of labor to do more than to bring together some of the more general elements of the System of Equity Jurisprudence, as administered in England and America. In many branches of this most complicated System, composed (as it is) partly of the principles of natural law, and partly of artificial modifications of those principles, the ramifications are almost infinitely diversified; and the Sources, as well as the Extent of these branches are often obscure and ill-defined, and sometimes incapable of any exact development. I have endeavored to collect together, as far as my own imperfect studies would admit, the more general principles belonging to the System in those branches which are of daily use and practical importance. My main object has been to trace out and define the various sources and limits of Equity Jurisdiction, as far as they may be ascertained by a careful examination of the Authorities, and a close Analysis of each distinct ground of that Jurisdiction, as it has been practically expounded and applied in different ages. Another object has been to incorporate into the text some of the leading doctrines which guide and govern Courts of Equity in the exercise of their jurisdiction; and especially in those cases where the doctrines are peculiar to those Courts, or are applied in a manner unknown to the Courts of Common Law. In many cases I have endeavored to show the reasons upon which these doctrines are founded; and to illustrate them by principles drawn from foreign jurisprudence, as well as

from the Roman Civil Law. Of course the reader will not expect to find in these Commentaries a minute, or even a general survey of all the doctrines belonging to any one branch of Equity Jurisprudence; but such expositions only as may most fully explain the Nature and Limits of Equity Jurisdiction. In order to accomplish even this task in any suitable manner, it has become necessary to bestow a degree of labor in the examination and comparison of authorities, from which many jurists would shrink, and which will scarcely be suspected by those who may consult the work only for occasional exigencies. It will be readily seen that the same train of remark, and sometimes the same illustrations, are repeated in different places. As the work is designed for elementary instruction, this course seemed indispensable, to escape from the inconvenience of perpetual references to other passages, where the same subject is treated under other aspects.

The work is divided into three great heads. First, The Concurrent Jurisdiction of Courts of Equity; secondly, the Exclusive Jurisdiction; and thirdly, the Auxiliary or Assistant Jurisdiction. The Concurrent Jurisdiction is again subdivided into two branches: the one, where the subject-matter constitutes the principal (though rarely the sole) ground of the Jurisdiction; the other, where the peculiar remedies administered in Equity constitute the principal (though not always the sole) ground of Jurisdiction. The present volume embraces the first only of these branches of Concurrent Jurisdiction. The remaining subjects will be fully discussed in the succeeding volume. I hope also to find leisure to present, as a fit conclusion of these Commentaries, a general review of the doctrines of Equity Pleading, and of the Course of Practice in Equity Proceedings.

In dismissing the work to the indulgent consideration of the Profession, I venture to hope that it will not be found, that more has been promised than is performed; and that, if much has been omitted, something will yet be found to lighten the labors of the inquisitive, if not to supply the wants of the learned.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

INDEX TO CASES CITED	Page xiii
--------------------------------	--------------

CHAPTER I.

The True Nature and Character of Equity Jurisprudence	Section 1-37
---	-----------------

CHAPTER II.

The Origin and History of Equity Jurisprudence	38-58
--	-------

CHAPTER III.

General View of Equity Jurisdiction	59-74 <i>e</i>
---	----------------

CHAPTER IV.

Concurrent Jurisdiction of Equity — Accident	75-109
--	--------

CHAPTER V.

Mistake	110-183
-------------------	---------

CHAPTER VI.

Actual or Positive Fraud	184-257 <i>b</i>
------------------------------------	------------------

CHAPTER VII.

Constructive Fraud	258-440
------------------------------	---------

CHAPTER VIII.

Account	441-529
-------------------	---------

CHAPTER IX.

Administration 530-589 *b*

CHAPTER X.

Legacies 590-608

CHAPTER XI.

Confusion of Boundaries 609-623

CHAPTER XII.

Dower 624-632 *b*

CHAPTER XIII.

Marshalling of Securities 633-645 *a*

CHAPTER XIV.

Partition 646-658

CHAPTER XV.

Partnership 659-683 *a*

CHAPTER XVI.

Matters of Rent 684-687

CHAPTER XVII.

Peculiar Remedies in Equity—Discovery—Cancellation and
Delivery of Instruments 688-711 *a*

CHAPTER XVIII.

Specific Performance of Agreements and other Duties . . . 712-793 *m*

INDEX TO CASES CITED

IN THE TWO VOLUMES.

THE REFERENCES ARE TO THE SECTIONS.

A.	Section.	Section.	
Abbott v. Middleton	1077 <i>b</i>	Agar v. Macklew	1457
v. Strattan	1020, 1503 <i>b</i>	v. Regent's Canal Co.	870
Aberaman Iron W. Co. v. Wick-	ens 203 <i>f</i>	Aguilar v. Aguilar	1376, 1398, 1399
Abernethy v. Hutchinson	949	Aikin v. Peay	496 <i>a</i>
Abraham v. Bubb	913, 915	Ainslee v. Goff	1455
Ackroyd v. Smithson	790, 793	Ainslie v. Medlycott	150, 193
Ackworth v. Ackworth	1115	Ainsworth v. Walmsley	951
Acton v. Blundell	927 <i>a</i>	Aislabie v. Rice	291
v. Pearce	136, 739, 1371	Akely v. Akely	1457 <i>b</i>
v. White	1390, 1394	Albany City Bank v. Schemerhorn	833, 833 <i>b</i> , 891
v. Woodgate	793 <i>b</i> , 972, 1036 <i>a</i> , 1036 <i>b</i> , 1045, 1046	Albert v. Perry	1338 <i>a</i>
Adair v. Shaw	465, 532, 581, 582, 1257, 1284	Alcock v. Sparhawk	1247
Adams v. Adams	579 <i>a</i> , 543 <i>a</i>	Aldborough, Earl of, v. Frye	334, 336, 338, 342, 343, 345, 347
v. Barrett	298	Alderson, <i>ex parte</i>	1044, 1047
v. Barry	1496	v. White	1020 <i>a</i>
v. Claxton	418, 1034, 1043, 1044, 1269	Aldrich v. Cooper	499, 502, 557 to 560, 562 to 565, 588, 633, 638, 1233 <i>a</i> , 1376
v. Clifton	1275	Aldridge v. Thompson	807, 811
v. Flanagan	499 <i>e</i>	v. Westbrook	547
v. Gay	304	Alexander v. Alexander	1065 <i>a</i>
v. Lambert	1164	v. Duke of Wellington	1040 <i>f</i>
v. Roberts	604 <i>a</i>	v. Newton	168
v. Shelby	203 <i>a</i>	v. Pendleton	410, 858, 854, 857 to 860
v. Stevens	138 <i>k</i>	Alger v. Thacher	292
v. Winne	125	Allan v. Allan	1490, 1511
Adamson v. Armitage	1382, 1383	v. Backhouse	487, 1064
Adderley v. Dixon	717, 718, 719, 722, 722 <i>a</i> , 723, 724 <i>a</i> , 746, 796	v. Bower	764
Addis v. Knight	1437	Allen v. Addington	212 <i>a</i>
Addison v. Bowie	1097	v. Anderson	1094, 1096
v. Dawson	225, 229	v. Anthony	400
Adley v. The Whitstable Co.	503, 691	v. Arme	433
Adlington v. Cann	1173	v. Brown	164 <i>f</i>
Adye v. Feuilletan	1273, 1274	v. Coster	1355
Agar v. Blethyn	1378	<i>ex parte</i>	235
v. Fairfax	650, 651, 656	v. Hammond	143 <i>a</i> , 143 <i>b</i>

- Allen *v.* Harding 725
v. Hearn 294
v. Hopson 74, 74 *c*
v. Knight 1020
v. Macpherson 184, 238, 1446
v. Papworth 1396
v. Poulton 1096
v. Scott 1273 *f*
v. Talbot 1562
v. Webster 1065 *e*
 Allendorf *v.* Black 935
 Alley *v.* Deschamps 714, 717 *a*, 741, 776
 Allhusea *v.* Whittell 482
 Alloway *v.* Braine 769 *a*
 Almy *v.* Reed 82
 Alnete *v.* Bettam 808
 Alsager *v.* Rowley 423, 581
 Alsops *v.* Patten 760
 Alton *v.* Harrison 432 *b*
 Ambrose *v.* Ambrose 1201
 v. The Dunmow Union 455, 891 *a*
 Amonett *v.* Amis 1021 *a*
 American Academy *v.* Harvard College 1164 *c*
 Ames *v.* King 951 *a*
 Amesbury *v.* Brown 486, 488
 Amory *v.* Francis 564 *b*
 Amoskeag Man. Co. *v.* Spear 951
 Amsinck *v.* Barklay 1473
 Ancaster *v.* Mayor 571, 572, 575, 576, 1248 *e*
 Anderson *v.* Abbott 1087 *b*
 v. Anderson 673 *a*, 1384
 v. Dawson 1394
 v. Elsworth 706 *b*
 v. Roberts 381, 435
 Anding *v.* Davis 1018 *a*
 v. Strobh 656 *b*
 v. Tydings 176
 Andrew *v.* Clarke 1208
 v. N. Y. Bible and Prayer-book Society 1154 *c*
 v. Spurr 134 *a*
 v. Wrigley 422, 580, 1129
 Andrews *v.* Berry 1494
 v. Brown 797, 798, 799
 v. Essex F. & M. Ins. Company 153, 158
 Will in re 1067 *b*
 v. Jones 317
 v. Pavis 184
 v. Sparhawk 1132 *a*
 v. Torrey 1018 *d*
 v. Trinity Hall 1091
 Angel *v.* Smith 831, 833, 833 *a*, 891
 Angell *v.* Angell 1483, 1501, 1507, 1508, 1513, 1514
 v. Hadden 807, 808, 811, 822, 1401
 Angier *v.* Angier 1425, 1472
 • *v.* Webber 893 *a*
 Angus *v.* Angus 1296, 1300
 Anon. 74 *d*, 673 *a*, 705, 1340
 Anon. *v.* Lyne 1382
 Ansdell *v.* Ansdell 1479 *a*
 Antrobus *v.* Davidson 639
 v. Smith 433, 706 *a*, 793 *b*, 987
 Aplyn *v.* Brewer 1280 *a*
 Appleby *v.* Dodd 471
 Appleyard *v.* Seton 74 *a*, 74 *f*
 Arbuthnot *v.* Norton 1040 *f*
 Arcedeckne *v.* Kelk 927 *a*
 Archer's case 448, 991
 Archer *v.* Hudson 309
 v. Preston 743, 744, 899
 Arden *v.* Goodacre 1039
 v. Patterson 1049, 1050
 Argles *v.* Herseman 473 *a*
 Arkenden *v.* Starkey 44
 Arkwright *v.* Gill 927 *a*
 Armitage *v.* Baldwin 499 *b*, 499 *c*
 v. Wadsworth 79, 88, 703
 Armstrong *v.* Gilchrist 71, 456, 457
 v. Toler 61
 Arnald *v.* Arnald 608
 Arnold *v.* Chapman 565, 1180, 1181
 v. Garner 1268
 v. Kempstead 1088
 Arnott *v.* Briscoe 206, 1528
 Arnsby *v.* Woodward 1323
 Arrowsmith, *in re* 604 *a*
 Arthington *v.* Fawkes 855
 Arthur *v.* Arthur 138 *f*
 v. Bokenham 1040
 v. Case 927
 Arundel *v.* Phipps 372, 709, 710, 717 *a*, 1368
 v. Trevillian 263
 Ashburton *v.* Ashburton 1357
 Ashby *v.* Palmer 790
 Ashcombe's case 1057
 Ashhurst *v.* Mill 138 *f*
 Ashley *v.* Baillie 537
 Ashton *v.* Atlantic Bank 977 *a*
 v. M'Dougall 273, 1384
 Ashton's Charity 1178
 Astle *v.* Wright 669 *a*
 Astley *v.* Reynolds 298
 v. Weldon 1314, 1318
 Aston *v.* Aston 915
 v. Heron 891
 v. Lord Exeter 74 *d*, 620, 1493
 v. Pye 705 *a*
 Astor *v.* L'Amoureux 760
 v. Wells 404, 408
 Athenæum Life Ins. Co. *v.* Pooley 907
 Atherford *v.* Beard 294
 Atherton *v.* Nowell 1424

- Athol v. Earl of Derby** 743
Atkins v. Chilton 926
 v. Farr 274
 v. Hill 590, 591, 593
 v. Hatton 617, 619
 v. Tredgold 1521 *b*
Atkinson v. Elliot 1435
 v. Leonard 64 *i*, 80, 81,
 1470, 1473
Atkinson v. Manks 806 to 809, 816,
 817, 821, 824
 v. Ritchie 1807
 v. Webb 1104
Atkinsons v. Allen 1582
Attorney-Gen. v. Baines 1171, 1172
 v. Baliol Col. 1237
 v. Berryman 1167
 v. Birmingham 925 *a*
 v. Boucherett 131 *a*,
 1191
 v. Boulton 1169, 1176
 v. Bowyer 1143, 1153,
 1155, 1170, 1171
 v. Brereton 1143, 1147,
 1149, 1163
 v. Brentwood School
 1153, 1154 *a*
 v. Bright 1067 *b*
 v. Browley 1178
 v. Brown 1147, 1164
 v. Brunning 552 *b*
 v. Burdett 1171
 v. Caldwell 1180
 v. Cambridge Gas
 Co. 927 *c*
 v. Chester, Bishop
 of 1164, 1170, 1184
 v. Christ's Hospital
 1192 *a*
 v. Clark 1164, 1190
 v. Clarendon 1161,
 1195
 v. Cleaver 893, 923,
 924 *a*
 v. Cohoes 921, 923
 v. Combe 1170, 1172
 v. Comber 1164
 v. Coopers' Co. 1167,
 1176, 1178, 1181,
 1289
 v. Cornethwaite 546
 v. Corporation of
 Chester 1194 *c*
 v. Corporation of
 Rochester 1178
 v. Coventry, Mayor
 of 684 *c*, 1191
 v. Craven 1181
 v. Day 740, 755, 759
Attorney-Gen. v. Dean, &c. of
 Windsor 1536,
 1580
 v. Dimond 583
 v. Dixie 1161, 1178
 v. Downing 1170, 1190
 v. Doughty 924 *a*
 v. Drapers' Co. 1167,
 1176, 1178, 1181
 v. Duplessis 1490
 v. Earl of Lonsdale
 1086, 1164
 v. Errington 809
 v. Fishmongers'
 Company 1520
 v. Forbes 921, 923, 924
 v. Foundling Hos-
 pital 1191
 v. Fullerton 619, 620
 v. Gardner 1191 *a*
 v. Gibson 1170 *a*
 v. Gladstone 1164
 v. Gleg 1175
 v. Goulding 1190
 v. Graves 1180, 1181
 v. Green 1169
 v. Guise 1168
 v. Haberdashers'
 Co. 1178
 v. Halifax 925 *a*
 v. Hall 1073
 v. Hamilton 652
 v. Harrow School 1163
 v. Heelis 1164
 v. Hewer 1164
 v. Herrick 1164, 1190
 v. Hickman 1166
 v. Hicks 1177
 v. Hodgson 604 *a*
 v. Hulton 1191 *a*
 v. Hurst 569, 1178,
 1180 to 1182
 v. Ironmongers'
 Co. 1117, 1167,
 1170 *a*, 1176, 1178,
 1182
 v. Jackson 1166, 1451,
 1456
 v. Jeanes 1163
 v. Johnson 922, 924
 v. Kell 1164
 v. Landaff 1170 *a*
 v. Lepine 1184, 1186,
 1300
 v. London, City of,
 1170 *a*, 1184, 1190
 v. Lunatic Asylum
 925 *a*
 v. Marchant 1178 *c*

- Attorney-Gen. *v.* Marlborough 915
v. Matthews 1190, 1191
v. Mayor of Bristol 1178
v. Mayor of Carlisle 1164
v. Mayor of Dublin 449, 1147, 1153, 1154 *a*, 1164
v. The Miners' Co. 1194 *c*
v. Middleton 1149, 1163, 1190, 1191
v. Minshall 1176
v. Morgan 700
v. Munro 1191 *a*
v. Murdock 1191 *a*
v. Newman 1147
v. Nichol 917, 924 *a*, 925, 926
v. Oglander 1169, 1170 *a*, 1190
v. Oxford, Bishop of, 1190
v. Painters' Company 1190
v. Parker 1163
v. Parkhurst 225
v. Parnther 229, 229 *a*
v. Peacock 1170
v. Pearce 1164
v. Pearson 1183, 1191 *a*
v. Platt 1170, 1175
v. Power 1164, 1168
v. Price 1163, 1190
v. Pyle 595
v. Rance 1164
v. Ray 1513
v. Richards 922
v. Rye 1152, 1171
v. Sheffield Gas Co. 927 *c*
v. Shore 1191 *a*
v. Sitwell 154, 157, 159, 161, 330, 755, 768, 769
v. Skinners' Co. 1153, 1154 *a*
v. Smart 1163
v. Sothen 239
v. South Sea Company 1191
v. Stepney 1164, 1176
v. Stephens 622
v. Stewart 1194
v. St. John's Hospital 1194 *b*
v. Syderfin 1167, 1170
v. Tancred 1146, 1151
- Attorney-Gen. *v.* Tomkins 1180, 1181
v. Trinity Church 1194 *a*
v. Trinity College, Cambridge 1181
v. Turner 1446, 1447
v. Tyndall 558, 563, 569, 633, 1180, 1181
v. Utica Insurance Co. 1191
v. United Kingdom E. T. Co. 925 *b*
v. Visitors of Lunatic Asylum 927 *d*
v. Wansey 1169, 1190
v. Whitechurch 1176
v. Whitely 1163
v. Whorwood 1408
v. Wigan 890 *a*
v. Williams 1164
v. Wilson 1177, 1178, 1181, 1191 *a*
v. Winchelsea 569, 1178, 1180, 1181
v. Woolrich 225
- Atwood *v.* Lamprey 111
v. Maude 665 *a*
v. Meriweather 440 *a*
v. Small 191, 192, 198, 200, 200 *a*
v. Vincent 64 *c*, 499
- Aubin *v.* Daly 1067 *b*
 Aubrey *v.* Middleton 1247
 Auburn, &c. Plank Road *v.* Douglass 927
 Audsley *v.* Horn 604 *a*
 Ault *v.* Goodrich 1520
 Auriol *v.* Smith 1452, 1459
 Aurora, The 1241
 Austen *v.* Boys 951 *d*
 Austin *v.* Austin 1326 *a*
v. Bell 1036 *a*
v. Chamber 310
v. Halsey 1226
v. Taylor 973
- Averall *v.* Wade 416, 475, 483, 492, 499, 503, 633, 634, 640, 1216, 1233 *a*
 Averill *v.* Guthrie 419
v. Loucks 553, 674
 Avery *v.* Griffin 793 *o*
v. Holland 74 *e*
v. Petten 493, 599 *a*
 Ayer *v.* Hawkins 459 *a*
 Ayers *v.* Husted 634, 642
 Aylett *v.* Ashton 1397
v. Dodd 1190
 Ayliffe *v.* Murray 321
 Aylward *v.* Kearny 320
 Aynsley *v.* Woodsworth 479, 481

Ayres v. Methodist Church	1154 c	Ball v. Harris	1064 b, 1127 a, 1190,
v. Waite	1028		1131
		v. Mannin	225, 236
		v. Montgomery	273, 1419, 1422,
			1423, 1426, 1476
		v. Smith	1207
		v. Storie	153, 156, 161
B.		Ballet v. Spranger	487
Bachelor v. Sargent	1401 i	Ballin v. Dellage	1401 i
Back v. Andrew	1:04	Ballinger v. Edwards	301
v. Kett	1094	Balmain v. Shore	1208
v. Stacy	926, 927	Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co.	
Backwell's case	544	v. Wheeling	1559
Bacon v. Bacon	1281	Bambury v. Briscoe	704
v. Bronson	184, 203	Bamfield v. Windham	572
v. Husband	1043	Bancroft v. Dumas	459 a
v. Jones	934, 959 a	Band v. Fardell	1269
Badeau v. Rogers	806, 807	Bank v. Campbell	499
Badgley v. Bruse	632	Bank of Augusta v. Earle	1562
Baggett v. Meux	1384	Australia v. Nias	1578
Bagot v. Oughton	576	Commerce, Appeal of	1023 c
Bagshaw v. Eastern Union Co.	959,	England v. Glynn	85
	1559	Hindustan <i>in re</i>	1233 b
v. Parker	673 a	Ireland v. Beresford	883,
Bagster v. Portsmouth	297		904
Bailey v. Bailey	161	Rochester v. Emerson	138 f
v. Devereux	891	Scotland v. Christie	459 a,
v. Ekins	552, 1064 b, 1131		595 a
v. James	141	the Republic v. Baxter	212 a
v. Lloyd	1062 a	Westminster v. White	1018
v. Sisson	658	Bank, Mechanics', of Alexandria,	
v. Taylor	933, 942	v. Lynn	750 a
Bainbridge v. Smith	173	Merchants' v. Packard	824
Baines v. Dixon	1064	United States v. Beverly	1060
Baker v. Bayley	989	v. Biddle	74 c
v. Biddle	974	v. Daniel	125, 137
v. Bradley	309 a	v. Etting	324
<i>ex parte</i>	1364	Bankart v. Houghton	1537
v. Mellish	903	Banks v. Evans	705
v. Monk	337 b	v. Sutton	629
v. Morgan	1575	Baptist Association v. Hart's Exec's	
v. Newton	1382 a		1137, 1146, 1154,
v. Paine	153, 154, 158 to 161		1156, 1169, 1183
v. Parson	44		v. Smith
v. Rogers	187		1184, 1191
v. Shelbury	730	Barber v. Barber	1520
v. Sutton	1157, 1164	Barbone v. Brent	894, 895
v. Tucker	309	Bardwell v. Perry	645 a
v. White	274	Barfield v. Nicholson	958
v. Whiting	1048, 1050	Barford v. Street	1394
v. Williams	303	Bariantinski, <i>in re</i>	1365 a
Baldwin v. Cawthorne	371	Baring v. Dix	673
v. Rochfort	322	v. Nash	647, 649, 653, 656,
v. Salter	771, 776		658
v. Society for Useful Knowl- edge	959 a	Barker v. Dacie	455, 457, 458, 517
Balfour v. Welland	1124, 1130, 1134	v. Duke of Devonshire	2417
v. Weston	102	v. Elkins	895, 896
Ball r. Ball	1341	v. Goodair	677, 678
v. Coggs	722	v. Hodgson	1307
v. Coutts	1361, 1418, 1419		

Barker v. Mar. Ins. Co.	315	Bassett v. Company	925 <i>f</i>
v. May	552, 640	v. Percival	575
v. Ray	184, 1445	Batdorf v. Albut	203 <i>f</i>
Barkworth v. Young	987 <i>a</i>	Bate v. Hooper	1269, 1275 <i>a</i> , 1534
Barling v. Bishop	361	v. Scales	1284
Barlow v. Bishop	1386	Bateman v. Bateman	1063
v. Grant	1355	v. Ross	1428
Barnard v. Bagshaw	1277 <i>e</i>	v. Willoe	895, 896
v. Large	996	Bates v. Dandy	1410
v. Lord, case of	915	v. Graves	1447
v. Wallis	959 <i>b</i>	v. Johnson	1227
Barnardstown v. Lingwood	335	v. Kempton	607 <i>d</i>
Barnawell v. Smith	1521 <i>b</i>	Bates and Henckil, <i>ex parte</i>	162
Barnes v. Baker	923	Bath, Earl of, v. Sherwin	59, 63, 64 <i>a</i>
v. Camart	162	76, 78, 859	
v. Patch	1065 <i>b</i> , 1071	and Montague's case	190,
v. Rackster	633, 634, 1233 <i>a</i>	238, 251	
Barnett v. Barnett	146	Bathurst v. Burden	721, 926
v. Spratt	246	v. Murray	1361
v. Weston	419	Batten v. Earnlay	603, 604, 845
Barney v. Beak	348	Battersbee v. Farrington	352, 356,
Barnsdale v. Lowe	1516	987 <i>a</i>	
Barnesley v. Powell	166, 254, 310, 440,	Battersley v. Smith	296
730		Battine <i>ex parte</i>	1040 <i>e</i>
Baron v. Husband	1039, 1043	Batture, case of the	865
Barr v. Hatch	172	Batty v. Chester	61, 296 <i>a</i>
v. Lapsley	708, 724	Baugh v. Price	335
v. Spears	673	v. Read	1111
Barratt v. Wyatt	1277 <i>e</i>	Bax, <i>ex parte</i>	448, 449
Barrell v. Joy	1268	Baxter v. Conolly	722
v. Sabine	1019	v. Earl of Portsmouth	225, 227,
Barret v. Alton and Sangamon		228	
Railway	1558	v. Wiley	1522 <i>a</i>
Barrett v. Baxter	230	Bayard v. Hoffman	355, 359, 368
v. Beckford	1103, 1122	Bayles v. Baxter	982 <i>a</i>
v. Hartley	1023 <i>e</i>	Bayley v. Boulcott	793 <i>d</i>
Barrington v. Horne	731	v. Edwards	623
Barristord v. Done	292	v. Greenleaf	1217, 1228,
Barron v. Grillard	1496	1229	
Barrow v. Barrow	385, 1080 <i>a</i>	v. Powell	1208
v. Greenough	256, 781	v. Tyrrell	1049
v. Paxton	1030	v. Williams	[300 <i>b</i>
v. Rhineland	523	Baylies v. Payson	1266
v. Richards	926 <i>a</i>	Baynard v. Norris	109, 400
Barry v. Croskey	190 <i>b</i>	Baynum v. Baynum	1476, 1477
v. Stevens	462 <i>a</i>	Beadell v. Perry	927 <i>b</i>
Barrymore v. Ellis	1384, 1394	Beal v. Hayes	1318
Barstow v. Kilvington	160	Beall v. Fox	1154 <i>c</i>
Bartholomew v. May	571	Bean v. Smith	434, 435
Bartle v. Vorbury	138 <i>k</i>	Beard v. Beard	1374
Bartlett v. Hodgson	1285	v. Linthicum	764
v. Pickersgill	758, 1201 <i>a</i> ,	v. Nuthall	987
1202		v. Travers	1360
v. Salmon	203 <i>b</i> , 212 <i>a</i>	Beardsley v. Knight	138 <i>f</i>
v. Nye	1164 <i>d</i>	Beary v. Pitt	331
Bartlett's case	203 <i>f</i>	Beasley v. Arcy	1436
Baskerville v. Brown	1440	v. Maggret	239
Bass v. Bass	741	Beatie v. Johnson	1338 <i>a</i>
Bass v. Dawbee	951 <i>g</i>	Beatson v. Beatson	793 <i>c</i>

Beaty v. Kurtz	927	Benbow v. Townsend	972, 1199, 1202
Beauchamp v. Huntley, Marquis of,	899	Bench v. Viles	1247
<i>v. Winn</i>	164 <i>h</i>	Bending v. Bending	1088 <i>a</i>
Beauford, Duke of, v. Berty	1330, 1337,	Benfield v. Solomons	301, 422, 423
1339, 1341		Bengough v. Walker	1103, 1115
<i>v. Roy</i>	239	Benn v. Dixon	604
<i>v. Wellesley</i>	1351	Bennet v. Bachelor	64 <i>f</i> , 596, 1208
Beaumont v. Boulton	218, 523	<i>v. Bedford Bank</i>	362
<i>v. Bromley</i>	160	<i>ex parte</i>	322
<i>v. Oliveira</i>	645 <i>c</i> , 1164 <i>b</i>	<i>v. Davis</i>	1380
<i>v. Reese</i>	296	<i>v. Mayhew</i>	1210
<i>v. Stubbs</i>	883	<i>v. Wade</i>	184, 236, 1500
Bechinall v. Arnold	1503	<i>v. Whitehead</i>	511, 512
Beck v. Burn	604 <i>a</i>	Bennett v. Abrams	747, 793 <i>r</i>
Beckett v. Cordley	64 <i>d</i> , 385, 390, 391	<i>v. Aburrow</i>	1062 <i>a</i>
Beckford v. Kemble	899, 900	<i>v. Fulmer</i>	1201 <i>c</i>
<i>v. Wade</i>	1529	<i>v. Hayter</i>	1140
Beckley v. Dorrington	423, 481	<i>v. Marshall</i>	180 <i>a</i>
<i>v. Newland</i>	265, 343, to 345,	<i>v. Robinson</i>	285, 291 <i>b</i>
785, 1040 <i>b</i>		<i>v. Smith</i>	959 <i>a</i>
<i>v. Backhouse</i>	402	<i>v. Walker</i>	2503 <i>a</i>
Beckley v. Coke	297	<i>v. Welch</i>	793 <i>s</i>
Bedell v. Hoffman	807, 824	<i>v. Wyndham</i>	1064 <i>e</i>
Bedford and Con. R. Co. v. Stan-		Bennett's Will	604 <i>a</i>
<i>ley</i>	778 <i>d</i>	Bensley v. Burden	1040
Beecker v. Beecker	591, 592	Benson v. Baldwin	87, 684, 686
Beemont v. Fell	180	<i>v. Benson</i>	1384
Beer v. Beer	481	<i>v. Gibson</i>	1314
Beeson v. Beeson	321	<i>v. Heathorn</i>	315, 466 <i>a</i>
Belcher v. Belcher	231	<i>v. Le Roy</i>	552, 890
<i>v. Butler</i>	416	<i>v. Whittam</i>	1069
Belchier, ex parte v. Parsons	1269,	Bent v. Young	589
1271, 1280		Bentley v. MacKay	694 <i>a</i> , 706 <i>b</i>
Belfast v. Chichester	1511	<i>v. Phelps</i>	1018
Belford v. Crane	372 <i>b</i>	Benwell v. Inns	292
Belknap v. Belknap	870	Benyon v. Nettleford	74 <i>a</i> , 296, 697,
<i>v. Sealey</i>	778	1494	
<i>v. Trimble</i>	927	Berdoe v. Dawson	337 <i>d</i>
Bell v. Coleman	1122	Beresford v. Hobson	1404, 1421 <i>a</i>
<i>v. Fleming</i>	564 <i>b</i>	Berg v. Radcliffe	164
<i>v. Gardiner</i>	138 <i>c</i> , 146	Bernal v. Donegal	336, 344
<i>v. Hunt</i>	806	Bernard v. Minshull	1068 <i>b</i>
<i>v. Locke</i>	951, 951 <i>a</i>	Berney v. Pitt	331
<i>v. London and Northwestern</i>		<i>v. Sewell</i>	837
<i>Railway</i>	1044	Berrington v. Evans	1248, 1249
<i>v. Nevin</i>	676 <i>c</i>	Berrisford v. Milward	390
<i>v. Phyn</i>	674, 1074 <i>e</i> , 1207	Berrill v. Hammond	664
<i>v. Quin</i>	293 <i>b</i>	Berry, in re	1365 <i>b</i>
<i>v. Savage</i>	44	<i>v. Mutual Ins. Co.</i>	64 <i>d</i> , 393,
<i>v. Whitehead</i>	940	419, 1020	
<i>v. Wilson</i>	515 <i>a</i>	<i>v. Wade</i>	731
Bellamy v. Burrow	295	Bertie v. Faulkland	288, 1315
<i>v. Jones</i>	1514	<i>v. Lord Abington</i>	488, 835
<i>v. Sabine</i>	129, 132	Besch v. Frolich	673 <i>a</i>
Bellasis v. Uthwatt	1103, 1105, 1109,	Best v. Stamford	790, 998, 1001
1111		<i>v. Stow</i>	141, 144, 161
Bellew v. Russell	311 to 313	Bettesford v. Dean of St. Paul's	716,
Bellows v. Stone	161	728, 738	
Beman v. Rufford	959, 1559	Betts v. Gann	145

Beverley <i>v.</i> Beverley	274, 387	Blackwell <i>v.</i> Bull	1065 <i>b</i> , 1065 <i>c</i>
<i>v.</i> Peter	1212	Blackwood <i>v.</i> Jones	1540
Beverley's case	224 to 226, 229, 230, 1328, 1333, 1336, 1362	Blades <i>v.</i> Blades	397
Bexwell <i>v.</i> Christie	201, 293	Blagden, <i>ex parte</i>	1432, 1433, 1437
Bicknell <i>v.</i> Evans	393	<i>v.</i> Bradbear	757
<i>v.</i> Field	900	Blagge <i>v.</i> Miles	1062 <i>a</i>
Bidder <i>v.</i> Trinidad P. Co.	710 <i>b</i>	Blain <i>v.</i> Harrison	624, 626, 630, 631
Biddle <i>v.</i> Moore	64 <i>i</i>	Blair <i>v.</i> Bromley	256, 1226, 1521 <i>a</i>
Bigelow <i>v.</i> Topliff	1018	Blaisdell <i>v.</i> Stearns	400
Bigland <i>v.</i> Huddleston	1080, 1085	Blake <i>v.</i> Banbury	1077, 1086, 1089
Bilbie <i>v.</i> Lumley	111, 125, 1255	<i>v.</i> Blake	541, 603, 839, 1077, 1086, 1089
Bill <i>v.</i> Cureton	371, 425, 793 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> Brooklyn	929
<i>v.</i> Kinaston	604	<i>ex parte</i>	1216, 1241
<i>v.</i> Price	348	<i>v.</i> Dorgan	673
<i>v.</i> Sierra Nevada L. W. & M. Co.	959 <i>f</i>	<i>v.</i> Hungerford	64 <i>d</i>
Billings <i>v.</i> Southee	314	<i>v.</i> Langdon	1437 <i>a</i>
Billon <i>v.</i> Hyde	457	<i>v.</i> Luxton	989
Bingham <i>v.</i> Bingham	111, 124, 137, 141	Blakely <i>v.</i> Brady	793 <i>c</i>
Binkes <i>v.</i> Rokeby	778	Blakemore <i>v.</i> The Glamorgan- shire Canal Co.	959
Binstead <i>v.</i> Colman	763	Blanchard <i>v.</i> Blood	1380
Birch <i>v.</i> Blagrove	297	<i>v.</i> Hill	951 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Corbin	814	Blanchett <i>v.</i> Foster	303
<i>v.</i> Ellames	395, 1020	Bland <i>v.</i> Middleton	1315
<i>v.</i> Tebbutt	459 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> White	326, 883
<i>v.</i> Wade	1061	Blandy <i>v.</i> Kimber	307
<i>v.</i> Wright	1013 <i>n</i>	<i>v.</i> Widmore	1104, 1106, 1107
Birchell, <i>ex parte</i>	1338	Blatch <i>v.</i> Wilder	1060
Birchett <i>v.</i> Bolling	666, 722	Blatchford <i>v.</i> Ross	959 <i>m</i>
Bird <i>v.</i> Railroad Co.	514 <i>a</i>	Blaydes <i>v.</i> Calvert	1470, 1473, 1474
<i>v.</i> Webster	1069 <i>b</i>	Blennerhasset <i>v.</i> Day	1455
Birds <i>v.</i> Askey	1074 <i>b</i>	Blewith <i>v.</i> Roberts	1065 <i>a</i>
Birdsall <i>v.</i> Colie	672 <i>a</i>	Blewitt, <i>in re</i>	1064 <i>a</i>
Birmingham <i>v.</i> Kirwan	1075, 1077, 1088, 1088 <i>a</i>	Bligh <i>v.</i> Brent	674
Biscoe <i>v.</i> Perkins	996, 997	<i>v.</i> Earl of Darnley	566
Bishop <i>v.</i> Church	158, 162, 518, 1437	Blight <i>v.</i> Page	1307
<i>v.</i> Day	327	Blinkhorn <i>v.</i> Feast	1208
<i>v.</i> Webster	1458	Blihtman <i>Re</i>	589 <i>a</i>
Bishop of Cloyne <i>v.</i> Young	1208	Blofield <i>v.</i> Grymes	1080 <i>n</i>
Bishop of Winchester <i>v.</i> Beaver	908	Blore <i>v.</i> Sutton	794, 797
<i>v.</i> Founier	700	Blount <i>v.</i> Burrow	607 <i>d</i>
<i>v.</i> Paine	908	<i>v.</i> Blount	744 <i>a</i>
Bissell <i>v.</i> Axtel	542	Blower <i>v.</i> Blower	1521 <i>a</i>
Bize <i>v.</i> Dickason	1256	Blundell <i>v.</i> Brettargh	103, 1458 <i>a</i>
Black <i>v.</i> Lamb	72, 164 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Gladstone	891 <i>a</i>
Blackburn <i>v.</i> Edgley	309	Blunden <i>v.</i> Barker	309
<i>v.</i> Gregson	1220, 1222, 1226, 1228	Board of Commerce <i>v.</i> Younger	203 <i>g</i>
<i>v.</i> Staples	160, 984	Boardman <i>v.</i> Mostyn	764
Blackett <i>v.</i> Bates	778 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> Mosman	1284
Blackford <i>v.</i> Christian	235 to 237	Boazman <i>v.</i> Johnson	499, 599
<i>v.</i> Davis	1018 <i>c</i>	Bock <i>v.</i> Goppissen	507
<i>v.</i> Preston	295	Boden <i>v.</i> Dillow	74 <i>d</i>
Blackhall <i>v.</i> Coombs	897	Bodenham <i>v.</i> Purchase	459 <i>a</i> , 459 <i>e</i> , 459 <i>f</i>
Blacklow <i>v.</i> Laws	1382, 1383	Bogey <i>v.</i> Shute	918 <i>a</i>
Blackmore <i>v.</i> Shelby	317	Bogle <i>v.</i> Stewart	840
		Bogue <i>v.</i> Houlston	939
		Bohn <i>v.</i> Headley	425

Boles v. Bader	1575 <i>a</i>	Bottomley v. Brooke	1436
Bolitho v. Hilyar	337 <i>c</i>	Bottsford v. Burr	758, 1201, 1201 <i>a</i> , 1202
Bolling v. Doneghy	499 <i>e</i>	Bouck v. Wilber	1458
Bolster v. Catterlin	929	Boughton v. Boughton	433, 1077, 1080, 1096
Bolton v. Deane	628, 684 <i>c</i>	Boulogny v. Fortier	1018 <i>d</i>
<i>v. Prentice</i>	1422	Boulton v. Stubbs	226, 234, 449, 883
<i>v. Ward</i>	646	Boura v. Wright	652
<i>Duke of, v. Williams</i>	177, 808, 811, 1398	Bourdillon v. Adair	1418
Bonaparte v. Camden and Amboy Railroad Co.	927, 959 <i>b</i>	Bourne v. Bourne	790, 1213 <i>a</i>
Bonar v. McDonald	324, 327 <i>a</i>	<i>v. Cabot</i>	1056
Bond, in re	1338 <i>a</i>	Bourtillier v. Tick	1454
Bond v. Hopkins	20, 64 <i>a</i> , 74 <i>d</i> , 529, 903, 975, 1520, 1521	Bouts v. Ellis	607 <i>a</i>
<i>v. Hays, Ex'r</i>	302	Bouverie v. Prentice	621, 622, 684 <i>c</i>
<i>v. Kent</i>	1226	Bovey v. Smith	400 <i>a</i> , 1264
<i>v. Lockwood</i>	518 <i>b</i>	Bowman v. Reeve	565
<i>v. Simmons</i>	1405, 1415	Bowditch v. Green	493, 499
Bone v. Cook	1284	Bowen v. Bowen	1314
Boner v. Montgomery	304	<i>v. Largan</i>	550
Boney v. Hollingsworth	308	Bowes v. Heaps	331, 335, 337 <i>a</i>
Bonfield v. Hossel	706 <i>b</i>	<i>v. Strathmore</i>	273
Bonny v. Redgard	422, 424, 1127, 1128	Bowker v. Bull	502 <i>a</i> , 634 <i>a</i> , 1208
Bononi v. Backhouse	927 <i>a</i>	<i>v. Hunter</i>	1065 <i>b</i>
Bonser v. Kinnear	1068 <i>b</i>	Bowles v. Bowles	1065 <i>b</i>
<i>v. Cox</i>	326, 560	<i>v. Orr</i>	895 <i>a</i> , 899, 903
Booker v. Allen	1118	<i>v. Steward</i>	217, 252, 254, 1500
Boon v. Barnes	1227	Bowling v. Bowling	704, 846
Boone v. Chiles	975, 1502, 1520	Bowmaker v. Moore	904
<i>v. Missouri Iron Co.</i>	749	Bowman v. Floyd	951 <i>d</i>
<i>v. The Hornet</i>	1241	<i>v. Wathen</i>	1520
Booth v. Evertson	499	<i>v. Yeat</i>	622, 684
<i>v. Leycester</i>	889	Bowh v. Stenson	769 <i>a</i>
<i>v. Rich</i>	1026	Bowser v. Colby	64 <i>e</i> , 1323
<i>v. Vicars</i>	1065 <i>b</i>	Bowsher v. Watkins	840
<i>v. Warrington</i>	1521	Bowyer v. Bright	778, 780
Bootle v. Blundell	571, 572, 1064, 1248 <i>d</i> , 1447	<i>v. Pritchard</i>	814
<i>v. Scarisbrick</i>	1074 <i>e</i>	Box v. Allen	924
Boosey v. Jeffreys	935	<i>v. Barrett</i>	180 <i>b</i>
<i>v. Purday</i>	935	Boyce's Executor v. Grundy	694
Bor r. Bor	1091, 1095	Boyd v. McLean	1201, 1202, 1260
Borell v. Dann	244, 400 <i>a</i>	Boyd's case	1211
Borneman v. Sidlinger	606 <i>a</i>	Boynton v. Boynton	1098
Borr r. Vandall	462	<i>v. Hubbard</i>	260, 261, 295, 342 to 344
Bosanquet v. Dashwood	239, 298, 300, 302, 303, 446	<i>v. Parkhurst</i>	1376
<i>v. Wray</i>	459 <i>a</i> , 459 <i>d</i> , 459 <i>g</i> , 679	Boyse v. Rossborough	1449 <i>a</i>
Bostick v. Blakeney	1263	Brace v. Duchess of Marlborough	413 414, 416, 419, 421, 436, 506, 1034, 1215
Bostock v. Flower	1273 <i>e</i>	Bracebridge v. Buckley	1321-1323, 1326 <i>a</i>
Boston Water-Power Co. v. Gray	1454	Bracken v. Bently	604, 609
Bostwick v. Atkins	317	Brackenburg v. Brackenburg	697
Boswill v. Brander	1408, 1410, 1411, 1414	Brackett v. Blake	1056
Boswell v. Goodwin	1023 <i>c</i> , 1023 <i>d</i>	<i>v. Waite</i>	432 <i>b</i>
Boteler v. Allington	996	Bradbury v. The Manchester, &c. Railway Co.	924
		Braddick v. Thompson	1452

Braden v. Gardner	1242	Bridgewater, Duke of, v. Edwards	684
Bradford v. Brownjohn	482	Bridgman's Trust, <i>in re</i>	1287
v. Marvin	1226	Briesch v. McCauley	894
v. Romney	164 <i>d</i>	Briggs, <i>ex parte</i>	400 <i>c</i>
v. Union Bank	152	v. Earl of Oxford	915
Bradish v. Gibbs	1370, 1371, 1372, 1380, 1390, 1395	v. French	899
Bradley v. Boseley	74 <i>e</i>	v. Penny	1068 <i>a</i>
v. George	1333 <i>b</i>	v. Taylor	460 <i>a</i> , 1268 <i>a</i>
v. Hughes	1384	v. Wilson	1521 <i>b</i>
v. Hunt	607 <i>a</i> , 607 <i>c</i>	Bright v. Boyd	177, 385, 388, 799 <i>b</i> , 1237, 1238, 1239
Bradshaw v. Bradshaw	1338, 1355	v. Eynor	184
Bradwin v. Harper	179, 180	v. Legerton	1520 <i>c</i> , 1538
Brady v. Waldron	914, 1017	Briley v. Suggs	499 <i>b</i>
Braely v. Crackenthorp	1516	Brinckeroff v. Lansing	387, 390, 876
v. Westcott	1394	v. Lawrence	606 <i>a</i>
Braithwaite v. Britain	676, 1127	v. Thalhimer	1025.
Bramlet v. Alt	293	Brisbane v. Adams	292
Bramwell v. Halcomb	759 <i>a</i> , 934, 939, 940, 959	v. Dacres	90, 111
Branch v. Hurst	239	Bristow v. Ward	1910
Brandao v. Barnett	1253 <i>a</i>	Britton v. Bathurst	90
Brandley v. Ord	410, 419	v. Twining	1067 <i>b</i>
Brandon v. Brandon	1065 <i>b</i>	Broadbent v. Imperial Gas Company	925 <i>a</i>
v. Forest County	203	Broadhurst v. Balguy	1284 <i>a</i> , 1269
v. Robinson	974 <i>a</i> , 1392	Brockenridge v. Holland	321
Brandreth v. Lance	948	Brocklehurst v. Jessop	1026
Brannan v. Oliver	321	Broderick v. Broderick	191, 196, 204, 217
Bransby v. Grantham	1080	Brodie v. Barry	1096, 1375 <i>a</i> , 1396
Branson v. Kinsie	1026	Bromage v. Genning	778
Brasbridge v. Woodruffe	1208	Bromfield, <i>ex parte</i>	790
Brashier v. Francis	553	Bromley v. Alt	201
v. Gratz	769, 771, 776	v. Holland	64 <i>i</i> , 80 to 82, 85, 692, 696, 698, 700, 700 <i>a</i>
v. West	1036, 1036 <i>a</i> , 1037	v. Smith	61, 298, 300, 302, 337 <i>a</i> , 379
Breadalbane, Marquis of, v. Chandos, Marquis of	895 <i>a</i>	Bronson v. Kinzie	1026
Brecknock, &c. Canal Company v. Pritchard	101, 1307	Brooke v. Berry	315
Breedon v. Breedon	1133	v. Enderby	459 <i>a</i> , 459 <i>g</i>
Brent v. Best	488 <i>a</i>	v. Gally	348
Brest v. Offley	1068	v. Lord Hertford	652, 656 <i>a</i>
Brett v. East India & L. Sh. Co.	793 <i>k</i>	v. Haynes	164 <i>h</i>
v. Greenwell	1421 <i>a</i>	Brookings v. White	1018 <i>e</i>
Brewer v. Pitkin	1036 <i>a</i>	Brooklyn Wh. L. Co. v. Masury	951 <i>e</i>
Brewster v. Hammett	678	Brooks v. Brooks	1368
Briant v. Corpening	440 <i>d</i>	v. Chaplin	763 <i>a</i>
v. Reed	821	v. Greathed	833 <i>a</i>
Brice v. Brice	309, 1097	v. Jennings	99
v. Stokes	1281, 1284	v. Reynolds	540, 547
Brice's case	676	v. Stolley	74 <i>b</i>
Bridge v. Beadon	997 <i>a</i>	Brooksbank v. Smith	1521 <i>a</i>
v. Brown	1354	Broome v. Monck	1077
v. Eggleston	369	Brotherhood's case	1539 <i>a</i>
v. Hindall	1474	Broughton v. Hutt	138 <i>g</i>
Bridgeman v. Dove	572	Brown v. Adams	1277 <i>g</i>
v. Gill	1520, 1521 <i>a</i>	v. Amyott	481
v. Green	236, 256	v. Bamford	1384
Bridges v. Longman	1064 <i>c</i>		
v. Mitchell	529		

Brown v. Brewerton	322	Buck v. Warren	1201 <i>c</i>
v. Brown 555, 607 <i>b</i> , 703, 1452, 1454, 1496		Buckeridge v. Glassel	1210
v. Bulkley	312 <i>d</i>	Buckland v. Pocknell	1226
v. Cassamajor	1289 <i>a</i>	Buckle v. Mitchell 352, 426, 693, 742	
v. Clark	1381, 1883	Buckley's Trust, in re	1365 <i>b</i>
v. Dodbridge	730, 1490	Buckmaster v. Harrop	758 to 760
v. Edsall	74 <i>e</i>	Buden v. Dore	1490
v. Evans	1452 <i>d</i>	Buffalow v. Buffalow	238
v. Gilman	1226	Buffar v. Bradford	1208
v. Haff	723, 796, 1469	Buford, W. S.	1039
v. Hammond	1074 <i>a</i>	Bugden v. Bignold	634 <i>a</i> , 1233 <i>a</i>
v. Heathcote	1038, 1229	Bulare v. Cook	410, 631
v. Higgs 98, 105 <i>a</i> , 169, 1061, 1061 <i>a</i> , 1068, 1068 <i>a</i> , 1070		Bulkley v. Wilford	219, 310, 321, 1262
v. Joddrell	225, 227	Bullock v. Boyd	74 <i>e</i>
v. Jones	168	v. Bennett	1074 <i>a</i>
v. Kelsey	1166	v. Dommet	101, 1307
v. Kennedy	164 <i>c</i> , 329 <i>b</i>	v. Menzies	1424, 1426
v. Lamphear	138 <i>k</i>	Bullpin v. Clarke	1400, 1401
v. Lawrance	1248 <i>d</i>	Bulmer v. Hunter	203 <i>f</i>
v. Leach	1016	v. Jay	1065 <i>b</i>
v. Lee	492, 496	Bulstrode v. Lechmere	1496
v. Like	1394, 1499	Bulteel, ex parte	177
v. Lynch	1262	Bumpus v. Plattner	410
v. Newell	959 <i>b</i>	Bunbury v. Bunbury	900
v. Paull	1289 <i>a</i>	Bunn v. Winthrop 793 <i>a</i> , 793 <i>b</i> , 973, 987	
v. Peck	291 <i>a</i>	Burbank v. Whitney	1154 <i>d</i>
v. Pocock	1384	Burchell, ex parte	1338
v. Pring	131, 149	Burden v. Dean 1408, 1411, 1424	
v. Ray	499 <i>e</i>	v. Stein	927
v. Selwin	1209	Burdett v. Clay	1035
v. The Monmouthshire Rail- way Company	959, 1562	v. Willett	1258
v. Vermuden	855	Burford v. Lenthall 1160, 1161, 1188, 1190	
v. Yeall	1155, 1164	Burgess v. Burgess	951 <i>a</i>
Brown's Trust, in re	1023 <i>c</i>	v. Lamb	915, 919
Browne v. Savage	408	v. Wheate 13, 64, 64 <i>g</i> , 1196 <i>b</i> , 1197, 1212, 1217	
Brownell v. Brownell	523, 527, 529	Burgh v. Burgh	410
Browning v. Morris	298, 300, 302	Burhans v. Burhans	650
v. Watkins	821	Burk v. Brown	523
Brownsmith v. Gilborne	787	v. Chrisman	499 <i>d</i>
Brownsword v. Edwards	1074 <i>c</i> , 1490	Burke v. Green	1049
Bruce v. Bonney	138 <i>l</i>	v. Jones	1521 <i>a</i>
v. President of Delaware Canal Co.	925	v. Rogerson	323
v. Ruler	212 <i>a</i>	v. Smythe	722
Bruin v. Knott	1354 <i>a</i>	Burles v. Popplewell	549
Brunker, ex parte	1467, 1468, 1470	Burn v. Burn	161, 162, 164
Bryan v. Cormick	833 <i>a</i> , 837	v. Carvalho	1040, 1047
v. Cowart	1018	v. Markham	607 <i>a</i>
v. Robert	710	Burnet v. Burnet	1355
Bryant v. Ware	623	Burnett v. Saunders	74 <i>a</i>
Brydges v. Landon	1247	Burnham v. Kempton	925 <i>f</i>
Bryson v. Whitehead	292, 722	Burns v. Huntingdon	499 <i>b</i>
Bucclle v. Atleo	542, 544	Burr, Ex'rs of, v. Smith	1154 <i>d</i>
Buchanan v. Hamilton	1287	Burr v. Sim	790
v. Ruaker	1576	Burrell v. Dodds	648
Buck v. Swasey	1040, 1206, 1250	Burrough v. Philcox	169, 1061 <i>a</i>

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Burroughs <i>v.</i> Elton | 423 | Caledonia Railway Co. <i>v.</i> Sprot | 927 <i>a</i> |
| <i>v.</i> McNeill | 74 <i>d</i> | &c. Railway Co. <i>v.</i> Hel- | |
| Burrows <i>v.</i> Jemima | 902 | ensburgh Trustees | 298 <i>c</i> |
| <i>v.</i> Lock | 193 | Calhoun <i>v.</i> Calhoun | 1393 |
| <i>v.</i> Walls | 322 <i>a</i> | Calkins <i>v.</i> Lockwood | 1040 |
| Burt <i>v.</i> Barlow | 124, 153 | Call <i>v.</i> Caleff | 1048 <i>a</i> |
| <i>v.</i> Cassety | 694 | Callaghan <i>v.</i> Callaghan | 706, 793 <i>a</i> , 973, |
| <i>v.</i> Wilson | 138 <i>l</i> | | 973 <i>b</i> , 1040 <i>c</i> |
| Burtenshaw <i>v.</i> Gilbert | 99 | Callahan <i>v.</i> Boazman | 459 <i>b</i> |
| Burton <i>v.</i> Marshall | 959 <i>a</i> | Calloway <i>v.</i> Witherspoon | 230 |
| <i>v.</i> Pierpont | 1376, 1380 | Calmady <i>v.</i> Calmady | 640, 654 |
| <i>v.</i> Smith | 1216, 1216 <i>a</i> | Campbell <i>v.</i> Campbell | 1123 <i>b</i> |
| <i>v.</i> Wiley | 895, 1574 | <i>v.</i> Dent | 459 <i>g</i> |
| Bury <i>v.</i> Oppenheim | 309 <i>a</i> | <i>v.</i> French | 179, 182, 1418 |
| Bush <i>v.</i> Western | 860 | <i>v.</i> Hodgson | 459 <i>a</i> |
| Bushby <i>v.</i> Munday | 899, 900 | <i>v.</i> Horne | 255 |
| Bushell <i>v.</i> Bushell | 397, 1469 | <i>v.</i> Ingilby | 138 <i>g</i> |
| Butcher <i>v.</i> Buchanan | 134 <i>a</i> | <i>v.</i> Ketcham | 231 |
| <i>v.</i> Butcher | 255, 760 | <i>v.</i> Macomb | 633, 641 |
| <i>v.</i> Churchill | 493, 499 <i>b</i> , 499 <i>c</i> | <i>v.</i> Mesier | 469, 493 |
| <i>v.</i> Staples | 763 | <i>v.</i> Moulton | 325 <i>a</i> |
| Bute <i>v.</i> Cunynghame | 499, 559 | <i>v.</i> Mullett | 675, 676, 1253 |
| Butler <i>v.</i> Baker | 1080 | <i>v.</i> Radnor | 1184 |
| <i>v.</i> Butler | 576, 1248 <i>b</i> | <i>v.</i> Scott | 939, 940 |
| <i>v.</i> Freeman | 1333, 1339, 1351 | <i>v.</i> Shrum | 1248 <i>a</i> |
| | to 1353, 1358 | <i>v.</i> Twemlow | 1455 |
| <i>v.</i> Haskell | 246 | <i>v.</i> Walker | 321, 322 |
| <i>v.</i> Hicks | 709 | Campion <i>v.</i> Cotton | 372 <i>a</i> |
| <i>v.</i> Miller | 1035 <i>c</i> | Canal Bank <i>v.</i> Bank of Albany | 140 |
| Butman <i>v.</i> Hassey | 146 | Cane <i>v.</i> Lord Allen | 311, 322 |
| Butterworth <i>v.</i> Walker | 749 <i>b</i> | Canedy <i>v.</i> Marcy | 138 <i>f</i> |
| Buxton <i>v.</i> James | 935 | Canham <i>v.</i> Jones | 951 <i>a</i> |
| <i>v.</i> Lister | 666, 708, 710, 717, | Cann <i>v.</i> Cann | 112, 113, 120, 124, 129, |
| | 719, 722, 769 | | 130 to 132, 184, 345, 1507 |
| Byne <i>v.</i> Potter | 696 | Cannell <i>v.</i> Buckle | 136, 739, 740, 1368, |
| <i>v.</i> Vivian | 696, 700 | | 1370, 1390 |
| Byrchell <i>v.</i> Bradford | 1263 | Canterbury, Archbishop of, <i>v.</i> | |
| | | House | 537 |
| | | <i>v.</i> Wills, | 536, 537 |
| | | Capel <i>v.</i> Butler | 326 |
| | | <i>v.</i> Girdler | 1001 |
| | | Capper <i>v.</i> Harris | 724 |
| | | Capps <i>v.</i> Holt | 737 <i>a</i> |
| | | Carden <i>v.</i> Butler | 1314 |
| | | Cardiff <i>v.</i> Cardiff W. Co. | 925 <i>d</i> |
| | | Carew's case | 214, 215 |
| | | Carey <i>v.</i> Askew | 603, 1096 |
| | | <i>v.</i> Wilcox | 1458 <i>a</i> |
| | | Carlisle, Corp. of, <i>v.</i> Wilson | 67, 442, |
| | | | 450, 452, 455, 457 |
| | | Carlton <i>v.</i> Earl of Dorset | 273 |
| | | <i>v.</i> Leighton | 1021, 1040 <i>b</i> |
| | | Carmichael <i>v.</i> Hughes | 1354 <i>a</i> |
| | | Carmore, Heir of, <i>v.</i> Park | 419 |
| | | Carnan <i>v.</i> Bowles | 941 |
| | | Carncross <i>v.</i> Lorimer | 1544 |
| | | Carpenter <i>v.</i> Am. Ins. Co. | 193 |
| | | <i>v.</i> Danforth | 229 <i>b</i> |
| | | <i>v.</i> Elliot | 239 |
- C.
- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| C. & A. Railw. <i>v.</i> Stewart | 793 <i>u</i> |
| Cadbury <i>v.</i> Duval | 1132 <i>a</i> |
| Cadman <i>v.</i> Homer | 197 |
| Cadogan <i>v.</i> Kennett | 352, 353, 359, 362, |
| | 369, 955, 956 |
| Cafe <i>v.</i> Bent | 604 |
| Caffrey <i>v.</i> Darby | 465, 1284 |
| Cage <i>v.</i> Russell | 1315, 1320 |
| Caillard <i>v.</i> Estwick | 367 |
| Caines <i>v.</i> Lessee of Grant | 1206 |
| Calcraft <i>v.</i> Roebuck | 777 |
| Caldicott <i>v.</i> Harrison | 1065 <i>c</i> |
| Caldwell <i>v.</i> Ball | 64 <i>c</i> |
| <i>v.</i> Baylis | 917 |
| <i>v.</i> Renfew | 987 <i>a</i> |
| <i>v.</i> Van Vliessengin | 934 |
| <i>v.</i> Wentworth | 459 <i>a</i> , 459 <i>g</i> |

Carpenter v. Herriot	309 a	Cauley v. Lawson	986
v. Ins. Co.	722, 724 a	Cavan, Lady, v. Pulteney	1083, 1985
v. Lockhart	1318	Cavendish v. —	1454
Carr v. Duvall	767	Caverley v. Williams	141, 144, 152, 777
v. Estabrooke	1092, 1122, 1419, 1426	Cawdor v. Lewis	385, 1237, 1436, 1437 a
<i>ex parte</i>	193	Cecil v. Butcher	433
v. Holliday	228	v. Juxen	1387
v. Taylor	1414	v. Plaistow	324
Carriers Company v. Corbett	927 b	Central R. R. & B. Co., Georgia,	
Carrington v. Holabaird	888, 1574	v. Prileau	959 h
Carrodus v. Sharp	769 a	Chadwick v. Doleman	433
Carter v. Balfour	1154 c	Chalie v. Pickering	891
v. Barnardiston	571	Chalk v. Wyatt	924 a, 927
v. Barnes	164 f	Chalmers v. North	604 a
v. Carter	172, 1408, 1428	v. Storil	1088 a, 1098
<i>ex parte</i>	1022	Chamberlain v. Agar	256, 781
v. Neal	1233	v. Chamberlain	90, 781
v. Palmer	311, 1211 a	v. Knapp	1504
v. Taggart	1384, 1418	v. Meeder	1021 a
v. United Ins. Co.	1057 a, 1057 b	Chamberlayne v. Dummer	912
v. White	983	Chambers v. Brailsford	1065 b
v. Williams	956 a	v. Crabbe	337 d
Carteret, Lord, v. Paschal	1040	v. Minchin	181, 1281, 1284
v. Petty	1292, 1298	v. Perry	1361
Cartwright v. Green	1496	Champernoon v. Gubbs	684 c, 686
v. Hateley	74 a	Champion v. Brown	499, 730, 783 to 785, 788, 789, 850, 1217, 1228
v. Pettus	1292, 1298	v. Wenham	252, 1451, 1454
v. Poultney	653, 658	Champlin v. Laytin	1382 e
Carvalho v. Burn	1038	Champney v. Cope	1018 e
Carver v. Bowles	1100, 1111	Chancey v. May	671
v. Richards	174 a, 777	Chancey's case	1120, 1122
Carville v. Carville	1060	Chandless v. Price	1067 b
Cary v. Abbott	1168	Chandos v. Brownlow	397
v. Bertie	511, 1143, 1147, 1190, 1306, 1315, 1319, 1328, 1334, 1362	Chandos, Duke of, v. Talbot	783, 1040
v. Cary	1070	Chaplin v. Chaplin	488, 571, 1103, 1109
v. Faden	940, 941	Chapman v. Beach	673
v. Goodinge	1208	v. Beardsley	1231 c
Casburne v. Inglis	1013, 1015, 1016	v. Brown	1156
Case v. Fishbock	80	v. Chapman	1020
v. James	1273 e	v. Derby	1435
Castelli v. Cook	957	v. Koops	677
Castle v. Badler	1575 a	v. Railroads	1552
v. Castle	1289 a	v. Reynolds	1074 d
Castleton v. Fanshaw	1521 a	v. Tanner	1220, 1228
Castrique v. Behrens	1582 a	Chappedelaine v. Dechenaux	523
Caswell v. Hill	1401 i	Chappell v. Davidson	951 a
Catchside v. Ovington	537	v. Shread	951 a
Cathcart v. Robinson	352, 362, 432, 669, 723, 750 a, 751, 796, 1716	Charge v. Goodyer	1065 b
Catlin v. Fletcher	440 c	Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge	1569
v. Valentine	924 a	Charlton v. Leighton	1021, 1040 b
Caton v. Caton	1522 b	v. Low	998
Cator v. Bolinbroke	1228	v. Poulter	669
Cator v. Cooley	402	v. Wright	522 a
Catt v. Fourle	876 a	Charnley v. Hiansbury	764

- Chase *v.* Barrett 105
 v. McLellan 1018 *c*
 v. Redding 607 *d*
 v. Westmore 506, 1216, 1453
 to 1455
 v. Woodbury 1333 *b*
 Chasemore *v.* Richards 927 *a*
 Chauncy *v.* Graydon 287
 Chautauque County Bank *v.* White 385
 Chavany *v.* Van Somers 668
 Cheale *v.* Kenward 724 *a*
 Chedworth *v.* Edwards 468, 623, 907,
 955, 1210
 Cheeseborough *v.* Millard 469, 483,
 484, 493, 494, 499, 499 *a*, 499 *c*
 501, 502, 559, 562, 569, 633,
 636, 638
 Cheesman, *ex parte* 1241
 Cheetham *v.* Crook 1436, 1437
 v. Ward 112
 Chennell *v.* Churchman 700
 Cherrington *v.* Abrey 926
 Cherry *v.* Bonetbee 1437
 v. Monro 64 *d*
 v. Stein 927 *a*
 Chertsey Market, *in re* 1191
 Cheslyn *v.* Dalby 310, 1451
 Chesman *v.* Nainby 294
 Chesslyn *v.* Smith 1396
 Chester *v.* Willis 1055 *b*
 Chesterfield *v.* Boulton 101
 v. Janssen 134, 184, 187,
 188, 190, 192, 244, 260,
 294, 298, 300, 306, 322,
 331 to 334, 336, 337
 341, 342, 345, 379
 Chesterman *v.* Gardner 400
 Chetwood *v.* Brittan 161
 Chichester's Executor *v.* Vass's Ad-
 ministrator 71
 Chicot *v.* Duquesne 1450, 1452, 1500
 Chilcot *v.* Bromley 1065 *b*
 Child *v.* Comber 753, 756
 v. Douglas 956, 1533
 Chilliner *v.* Chilliner 715
 Chilton *v.* Robbins 502 *b*
 Ching *v.* Ching 1455
 Chisolm *v.* Gadsden 192
 Chiswell *v.* Morris 632
 Chitty *v.* Parker 790, 1200, 1214, 1247
 v. Williams 1247
 Cholmondeley *v.* Ashburton 1065 *b*
 Marquis of, *v.* Lord
 Clinton 64 *a*, 952,
 975, 1013, 1028 *a*,
 1049, 1520
 v. Oxford 1514
 Christie *v.* Craig 957
 Christmas *v.* Oliver 1040
 Christophers *v.* Sparks 1028 *b*
 Christ's College, case of 1171
 Christ's Hospital *v.* Hawes 1171
 Chubb *v.* Peekham 793 *m*
 Chudleigh's case 968, 991
 Chumley, *ex parte* 1364
 Church *v.* Mar. Ins. Co. 315
 Churchill *v.* Churchill 1123 *c*
 v. Lady Hobson 1820, 1821
 v. Roger 144
 Churchman *v.* Ireland 1094
 Churton *v.* Douglas 951 *d*
 Circuit *v.* Perry 1074 *b*
 City Bank *v.* Bangs 822, 824
 City of London *v.* Levy 1483
 v. Mitford 1324
 v. Nash 725, 742, 798
 v. Perkins 856
 v. Pugh 721
 Clack *v.* Calon 1277 *e*
 Clancarty *v.* Latouche 528
 Clapton *v.* Martin 152
 Clare *v.* Clare 1067 *b*
 v. Earl of Bedford 385, 390
 Clarendon, Earl of, *v.* Barham 560,
 574, 576
 v. Hornby 654,
 657
 Claridge *v.* Hoare 1494
 Claringbold *v.* Curtis 722
 Clark *v.* Bogardus 1100
 v. Clark 842 to 845 *a*, 951 *e*
 1280 *a*, 1283, 1341
 v. Cost 1434, 1436 *a*
 v. Flint 724
 v. Freeman 948 *a*, 951
 v. Guise 1077, 1080, 1086
 v. Hart 1541
 v. Lord Abington 1316 *a*
 v. Malpas 337 *b*, 694 *a*
 v. May 1016 *c*
 v. Perrain 296
 v. Pistor 1396
 v. Price 958, 959 *a*
 v. River, (Lord) 793 *n*
 v. Royle 1227, 1233
 v. Sewell 1100, 1101
 v. Ward 229
 v. Wright 762, 765
 Clarke *v.* Byne 811
 v. Dutcher 111
 v. Grant 161, 770
 v. Henty 883, 904
 v. Johnston 543 *a*
 v. Ormond 549, 550, 890
 v. Parker 257, 279, 284, 286,
 287, 290, 291
 v. Richards 1207 *a*
 v. Tipping 462, 465, 523, 1270

Clarke's Executors v. Van Reimsdyk	1528	Cock v. Ravié	1474
Clarkson v. Earl of Scarboro'	482	v. Richards	274, 275
v. Hanway	235, 236	Cockburn v. Thompson	671
v. Morris	255	v. Peel	1269 a
Classon v. Bailey	736 a	Cockerill v. Cholmeley	137
v. Morris	88, 499, 638	Cocks v. Foley	87, 284
Clavering v. Clavering	433	v. Purday	935
v. Westley	684	Cocksedge v. Cocksedge	1420
Clavering's case	1476, 1477	Cockshott v. Bennett	379
Clay, <i>ex parte</i>	675	Codd v. Codd	1476
Clay v. Pennington	1354, 1355	Codrington v. Parker	837
v. Sharp	1027	Coe v. Lake Co.	925 a
v. Willis	552	Coe's Trust, <i>in re</i>	1355 a
Clayton v. Bussey	138 l	Coffeen v. Branton	951 a
Cleeve v. Mahony	925 c	Coffin v. Elliott	1074 b
Cleghorn v. Insurance Bank	675	Coham v. Coham	1338 a
Cleland, <i>ex parte</i>	1233 b	Cohen v. Whaley	1269 a
v. Hedley	1452 a	v. Wilkinson	1559
Clement v. Maddick	951 d	Coker v. Birge	926 a
v. Wheeler	915	Colbert v. Daniel	543 a
Clements v. Hall	1535	Colburn v. Simms	623, 933
Clemmons v. Drew	164 a	Colchester, Mayor of, v. Lowton	700
Clemson v. Davidson	1047	v. Stamford	559
Clere's case	1062 a	Colclough v. Sterum	1132
Clergy Society, <i>in re</i>	180 a	Cole v. Gibbons	306, 331, 335, 339, 345
Clerk v. Clerk	225, 229 a	v. Gibson	263, 266, 306, 345
v. Miller	1401	v. Robbins	230, 231
Clerke v. Clark	929 c	v. Scott	1226
Cleverden v. Webb	184	v. Wade	1061
Cleverley v. Cleverley	890	v. Warden	553
Clifford v. Brooke	794	v. White	763
v. Francis	1770	Coleman v. Britain	1502
v. Lewis	1246	v. Eastern Counties Rail- way Co.	1559
Clifton v. Burt	561, 562, 565, 566, 569, 633	v. Frazer	229 b
v. Levor	1523 a, 1573	v. Wathen	941 a
Clinan v. Cooke	153, 161, 759 to 761, 764, 765, 767, 770, 797	v. Winch	418
Clinch v. Financial Corporation	440 a, 1493 e	v. Wooley	1400
Clinton v. Hooper	1373	Coles v. Jones	1047
Clippinger v. Hepbaugh	293 b	v. Sims	400 a, 956, 1533
Clive v. Carew	1080 b	v. Trecothick	760
Clopton v. Butman	1065 b	Colesworth v. Brangwin	1208
Cloud v. Clinkenbeard	1122	Collet v. Jaques	87, 284
Clough v. Bond	1269	Collier v. Jenkins	778
v. Ratcliffe	62	v. Mason	769 a
Clowes v. Dickenson	1233 a	v. McBean	771
v. Ganaway	793 i	v. Plumb	736
v. Higginson	134, 153, 156, 158, 161, 742	v. Slaughter	291 b
Cloyne v. Young	1208	Collins v. Archer	64 c, 630, 631
Clun's case	475	v. Blantern	298
Coats v. Clarence Railway Co.	926	v. Cave	190 b
v. Holbrook	951, 951 a	v. Hare	331
Cobethorn v. Williams	44	v. Vanderbilt	1452 a
Cochrane v. Chambers	367	Collins Company v. Brown	951 c
Cock v. Donovan	1514	v. Cowen	951 c
		Collinson v. Lister	400 b
		v. Patrick	793 a, 973, 1040 e

Collison's case	1146, 1152, 1171, 1172	Cook v. Johnson	361
Collyer v. Fallon	1040 d, 1044, 1057, 1231	v. Martin	862
Colman v. Crocker	375	v. Walker	1208
v. Duke of St. Albans	1017	Cooke v. [———]	498
v. Sarrel	483, 633, 698, 706 a, 793 a, 973, 987	v. Cholmondeley	1447
Colmer v. Colmer	1424, 1425	v. Clayworth	693, 1528
Colson v. Thompson	764, 767, 771	v. Nathan	137
Colt v. Netterville	711, 724 a	v. Turner	1447
v. Wollaston	184	Cookes v. Hellier	88, 1096
Cotton v. King	433	Cookney v. Anderson	683 a
v. Wilson	1447	Cookson v. Ellison	1499
Columbia v. Chichester	724	Cooley v. Rankin	230
Columbine v. Penhall	372 a	Coomb, <i>ex parte</i>	1020
Colville v. Middleton	1247 a	Coomes v. Elling	1378
Colyear v. Mulgrave, Countess of, 793 d, 973, 1040 c, 1223		Coope v. Carter	1284 b
Colyer v. Clay	142	v. Twynham	497 a, 498
v. Langford	1574	Cooper v. Cartwright	1016 c
Combe v. Jordan	1132	v. Denne	749
Coming, <i>ex parte</i>	1020	v. De Tastet	816 to 818
Comm'l Bank v. Cunningham	408 a	v. Evans	502 c
v. Reserve Bank	499, 1233 a	v. Hubbuch	929 b
v. Wilkins	675	v. Martin	174 b
Commonwealth v. Briggs	1341	v. Reilly	1040 f
v. Stauffer	285, 288, 291 b	v. Remsen	291 d
v. Wright	921	v. Spottiswoode	1126
Company v. Perley	164 b	Cooth v. Jackson	294, 362, 757, 758, 765, 766, 1528
Compton, Lord, v. Oxenden	790, 1035 b	Cope v. Cope	571, 576
Condley v. Parsons	293	v. Doherty	491 a
Conduit v. Soane	1365 b	v. Wilmot	1064 a
Conington's Will, <i>in re</i>	1307 a	Copeman v. Gallant	1259
Conklin v. Conklin	655	Copis v. Middleton	244, 246, 353 to 355, 360, 363, 493, 499, 499 b, 499 c, 499 d
Connecticut v. Jackson	1277	Copland v. Toulman	459 a
Connelly v. Connelly	1428 a	Copley v. Copley	1111
Conner v. Drake	671	Copp v. Sawyer	607 c
Conrad v. Atlantic Ins. Co.	1258	Coppin v. Coppin	111, 1226
v. Harrison	633	Coppinger v. Fernyhough	90
Consequa v. Fanning	523	Coppock v. Bower	293 b
v. Willings	140	Coquillard v. Suydam	463, 464
Consolidated Inv. & Ins. Co. v. Riley	1035 a	Corbet v. Barker	1028 a, 1029 b
Constantine v. Blache	379	v. Tottenham	1354
Converse v. Ferre	1235	Corbett v. Poelnitz	1400
Conyers v. Abergavenny	855	Corbett's Trusts	604 a
Cood v. Cood	1520 d	Corbyn v. French	1182
Cook v. Addison	1277 g	Cordel v. Noden	1208
v. Clayworth	230 to 232	Corder v. Morgan	1027
v. Coolingridge	322	Cordwill v. Mackrill	400 a
v. Duckingfield	1191	Corking v. Pratt	120, 124, 140, 309
v. Earl of Rosslyn	820 a	Corley v. Lord Stafford	310, 312 a
<i>ex parte</i>	675	Corneforth v. Geer	125, 1453
v. Fountain	1195	Cornfoot v. Fowke	193 a
v. Hutchinson	1196 a, 1202 to 1204	Corning, <i>ex parte</i>	1020
		v. Lowerre	924, 927
		Cornish v. Lanner	806
		Cornwall v. Cornwall	571
		Corporation of Burford v. Lenthall	1188, 1336

Corporation of Carlisle v. Wilson	855	Cox's Lady, case	347
Ludlow v. Greenhouse	794 a, 1147, 1154 a, 1163	Coxe v. Bassett	1115
New York v. Mapes	925, 935	v. Bateman	1286
Corson v. Mulvany	793 s	Crabb v. Crabb	1205
Cortelyou v. Lansing	1008, 1019, 1030 to 1033	Crabtree v. Bramble	64 g
Cory v. Cory	124, 132, 232, 239	Cradock v. Piper	633
Coslake v. Till	722, 776	Craft v. Lathrop	900
Cothay v. Sydenham	393	Cragg v. Holme	232
Cottam v. Eastern Co. Railw.	1277 b	Craig v. Leslie	64 g, 790, 792, 793, 1212, 1245
Cotter v. Laver	1390	Crakelt v. Bethune	1263
Cotterell v. Homer	353, 452	Crallan v. Oulton	1521 a, 1521 b
Cottin v. Blane	639	Cram v. Mitchell	316, 322
Cottingham v. Fletcher	755, 756, 758, 1101	Crane v. Burntrager	812
Cotton v. Cotton	1065 b, 1370	v. Conklin	231
ex parte	710 b	v. Drake	1129
Coulson v. Walton	771, 1520	v. Hancks	89
v. White	925, 995	Cranmer, ex parte	1365
Coulter's case	799 a	Cranstown v. Johnston	743, 744, 899, 1293, 1294
Court v. Jeffrey	1398	Crassen v. Swoveland	1018 b
Courtenay v. Goodshall	130, 396, 401, 402, 404, 457, 458	Crawford v. Fisher	808, 817 a
Courthope v. Maplesden	928, 929	Crawshay v. Collins	672, 676 b, 1457
Coutant v. Schuyler	607 c	v. Maule	653 a, 666, 672
Coutts v. Walker	1216 a	v. Thornton	801, 802, 806, 812, 817, 817 a, 818, 820
Covenhoven v. Shuler	604, 845, 845 a	Cray v. Mansfield	315
Coventry v. Burslen	519	v. Willis	602
v. Coventry	575, 1249	Craythorne v. Swinburn	493, 495, 496, 498, 499, 499 b, 499 c
v. Hall	512	Creagh v. Blood	223
Cowdry v. Day	312 a	Creath v. Sims	529
Cowell v. Edwards	496	Creuse v. Orbey Hunter	1341
v. Gatcombe	1277 b	Crews v. Burcham	901 a
v. Simpson	1222, 1226	Cripps v. Jee	1199
v. Sykes	676	Crisp, ex parte	493, 499 b
Cowen v. Milner	306	Crispell v. Dubois	309, 314
Cowes v. Higginson	134	Crockett v. Crockett	1289 a
Cowles v. Whitman	709, 724	Crockford v. Alexander	928, 929
Cowling v. Cowling	1074 d	Croft v. Day	951 a
Cowper v. Baker	929	v. Graham	694 a
v. Clerk	856, 857	v. Powell	1027
v. Cowper	13, 19, 63, 64 a, 64 b, 254	v. Wilbar	987 a
Cowtan v. Williams	811	Croft's Exr's v. Lyndsey	90, 878
Cox v. Clift	700 a	Crofts v. Middleton	138 g
v. Cox	482	v. Moore	499 b, 499 d
v. Corkendall	566 c	Crook v. Brooking	972
v. Dolman	1521 a	v. Turpin	1412
v. Fenwick	1227	v. Whitley	1065 c
v. Higford	1326 a	Crooke v. De Vandes	1067, 1067 a
v. McBurney	674	Crookes v. Petter	941 a
v. Parker	1296 b	Croome v. Lediard	1531
v. Smith	650, 658	Crop v. Norton	1201, 1201 a
v. Toole	1027 a	Crosbie v. Free	1415
v. Tyson	327	v. Guion	673 a
Cox's Creditors' case	547	v. McDonal	787
		Crosby v. Church	1400
		v. Middleton	153, 164

Crosby v. Murray	1077	Cushing v. Townshend	342, 344
Crosier v. Acer	125	Cushman v. Wooster	1456 a
Crosley v. Marriot	1470	Cutler v. Coxeter	1131
Cross v. Addenbroke	790	v. Powell	471
Crosse v. Smith	90, 868, 1281, 1283	Cutter v. Emery	498
Crosskill v. Bower	1277 e	Cutting v. Carter	1452 b, 1452 c, 1574
Crossley v. Clare	1065 b	Cuyler v. Brandt	400
v. Derby Gas-Light Com- pany	934	v. Ensworth	499 b
Crossling v. Crossling	170		
Croston v. Baynes	755	D.	
Croton Turnpike Co. v. Ryder	927	Dabbs v. Nugent	442 a
Crousilat v. McCall	242, 448	Da Costa, or Villa Real v. Mellish	1338, 1340
Crowder v. Tinkler	923, 925	v. De Pas	1164, 1168, 1190
Crowe v. Ballard	239, 306, 315, 344, 345	v. Jones	294
Crowfoot v. Gurney	1045, 1049	Dakins v. Berisford	1383
Croyston v. Baynes	755	Dalbiac v. Dalbiac	220, 243, 252
Cruger v. Cruger	1395	Dalby v. Pullen	778
v. Douglas	1395, 1428 a	Dale v. Cooke	1434, 1437
Cruikshank v. Roberts	841, 900	v. Sollett	1434
Crumb, <i>ex parte</i>	1339	Dalglish v. Jarvie	874
Cruse v. Barley	793, 1200, 1212, 1214	Dally v. Wonham	329 a
v. Paine	724 b	Dalton v. Coatsworth	81, 184, 252, 254
Cruttrell v. Lye	292	v. Poole	64
Cruwys v. Colman	964, 1065 b, 1071	Daly v. Kelly	908, 953
Cud v. Rutter	711, 717, 724, 724 a, 798, 799	Dalzell v. Welsh	1065 b
Cuff v. Dorland	793 t, 793 n	Dame Burg's case	381
Cull v. Showell	1093	Dame v. Mallory	1030
Cullingsworth v. Loyd	379	Damer's case	1171
Cullwick v. Swindell	710 b	Danbury & Norwalk Railway v. Wilson	1558
Culpepper v. Aston	565	Danbury v. Robinson	1503 b
Cumberland v. Codrington	576, 972, 1037, 1248 b	Dand v. Valentine	925
Cumberland Coal and Iron Co. v. Sherman	322 a	Danforth v. Streeter	1057 c
Cumberland Valley Railway v. Mc- Lanahan	1549	Daniel v. Dudley	1065 b
Cunard v. Atlantic Ins. Co.	1210	v. Kent	400
Cunningham v. Dwyer	372 b	v. Newton	1353
v. Plunkett	706 a	v. Skipwith	1026
Curling v. May	790	Daniell v. Mitchell	140
Curre v. Bowyer	1214 a	Daniels v. Davidson	400, 788, 1217
Currie v. Goold	111	Danvers v. Manning	179, 180
Curson v. African Co.	1252, 1436	Darby v. Darby	653 a
Curtis v. Auber	1055	D'Arcey v. Blake	626, 629, 974
v. Buckingham, Marquis of	963	Darcey v. Chute	1371
v. Curtis	511, 512, 624, 626, 628, 684 c, 1347 a	Dare Valley Railway Company, <i>in re</i>	1456 a
v. Hutton	1180, 1184	Darke v. Williamson	1020 a
v. Perry	177, 297	Darley v. Darley	1372, 1380 to 1382
v. Price	371	v. Martin	1069 b
v. Rippon	1070, 1072, 1073, 1338	Darlington v. Pultney	95, 170, 171, 177
v. Smallridge	895	Darnley v. L. & C. Railw. Co.	778 d
		Darrel v. Pritchard	929 b
		Darthez v. Clemens	458 a, 459
		v. Winter	821
		Dartmouth, Earl of, v. Howe	610

Dartmouth College v. Woodward	1569	Dawson v. Clarke	596, 1208
Dashwood v. Bithazey	1026	v. Dawson	523, 1425, 1470 to 1472
v. Peyton	1068 a, 1085, 1086	v. Lawes	325 a, 890 a
Daubeny v. Cockburn	381	v. Massey	317
Daubigny v. Davallan	1495	v. Newsome	131 a
Davenport v. Stafford	252	Day v. Cummings	73, 74 b
v. Mason	765	v. Day	604 a, 1092
Davers v. Dewes	1208	v. Dunham	399 to 401
Davey v. Durant	1027 a	v. Merry	915
Davidson v. Greer	157	v. Perkins	674
v. Isham	926 a	v. Williams	1122
v. Little	769	v. Wells	793 h
Davie v. Beardsham	789	Deal v. Bogue	677
v. Verelst	1514	Dearborn v. Taylor	1018 c
Davies v. Austen	64 c, 422 c, 1035 a	Deaver v. Eller	1050
v. Bodd	85, 86	De Barante v. Gott	1370
v. Davies	88, 329 a, 1540	De Beranger v. Hammel	673
v. Humphreys	492	De Bernales v. Fuller	1042
v. Otty	300 b	De Carriere v. De Calonne	1468
v. Stainbank	498 a	De Caters v. Le Ray de Chaumont	1036 a
v. Thornycroft	1384	De Garcia v. Lawson	1182, 1184
Davies' Will, <i>in re</i>	604 a	De Hoghton v. Money	694 a, 793 o
Davis v. Bowsher	1253 a	De Klyn v. Walkins	744
Doctor, case	1359	De La Garde v. Lempriere	1417, 1418
v. Davis	503	De Lisle v. De Lisle	1030
v. Dowding	1026	De Manneville v. De Manneville	1333, 1334, 1336, 1339, 1341, 1341 a
v. Duke of Marlborough	294, 331, 334, 335, 337, 340, 344, 700, 829, 830, 836, 837, 1039, 1040 d	De Manville v. Compton	193, 273
v. Earl of Strathmore	396, 407	De Montmorency v. Devereux	310
v. Gardner	1247	De Peystar v. Clendining	1061
v. Hone	741, 775	De Riemer v. De Cantillon	1575
v. Jones	734, 735	De Rivafinoli v. Corsetti	1474
v. Leo	913	De Themmines v. De Bonneval	1163, 1182, 1184, 1190
v. May	1277	Deacon v. Smith	1231
v. Mason	292	Deaderick v. Watkins	246
v. McNally	239 a	Dean v. Dalton	1208
v. Meeker	109	Deane v. Izard	717, 798, 799
v. Monkhouse	90	Dearle v. Hall	1035 a, 1057, 1196
v. Parker	793 t	v. Lovering	1196
v. Perrine	499 b	Deas v. Harvie	74 a
v. Stone	741	Debeze v. Mann	1111, 1114, 1117
v. Symonds	152 to 154, 156, 158, 160	Debigge v. Lord Howe	1493 a
v. Thomas	165	Debonham v. Ox	239, 263, 265
v. Turnbull	1514	Decouche v. Savetier	1520
v. West	1314, 1315	Deeks v. Strutt	539, 591, 592, 594
Davison v. Atkinson	1380	Deerhurst v. St. Albans	984
Davor v. Spurrier	388	Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea	469, 470
Davoue v. Fanning	322, 1211	v. The York & Cum. Rail- way Co.	475, 490, 493, 495, to 498 1559
Davy v. Davy	684, 685, 741	Deeze, <i>ex parte</i>	1216
v. Hooper	1061	Deforest v. Bates	1314
v. Pollard	1406	Deg v. Deg	551, 552, 554, 557, 1201, 1210
Davys v. Boucher	1115	Degge, <i>ex parte</i>	1357, 1362, 1364
Dawes v. Head	589	Dehon v. Foster	957 c
Dawkins v. Gill	294		
Daws v. Benn	519		
Dawson v. Chater	1447		

Delapole v. Delapole	919	Digby Earl of, v. Howard	1425
Delaware Ins. Co. v. Hogan	158, 161	<i>ex parte</i>	486
Del Mare v. Rebello	180	Diggs v. Wolcott	900
Delmonics v. Guillaume	674	Dilley v. Doig	854
Deloraine v. Browne	1521	Dillon v. Coppin	793 a, 793 b, 793 c
Delver v. Barnes	1457	<i>v. Graw</i>	1401 a
<i>v. Hunter</i>	628	<i>v. Parker</i>	1075, 1079, 1080, 1085, 1090, 1092, to 1094, 1096, 1097
Demandray v. Metcalf	1032, 1034	<i>v. Robinson</i>	203 a
Demarest v. Wyncoop	410, 1016, 1396	Diman v. Pr. W. & Br. R. R. Co.	147
Deniston v. Little	770 a	Dimes v. Scott	1277 a
Dennison v. Goehring	95, 986	Dimmoch v. Hallett	293 a
Denny v. Gilman	72	Dinwiddie v. Bailey	455, 457, 458, 462
Dent v. Auction Mart Co.	929 c	Disney v. Robertson	857
<i>v. Bennett</i>	314	Dixon v. Dixon	1227
<i>v. Dent</i>	1493 c	<i>v. Ewart</i>	177
<i>v. McGrath</i>	372 b	<i>v. Fraser</i>	1493 e
Denton v. Denton	1425, 1472	<i>v. Hammond</i>	817
<i>v. Donner</i>	238 a	<i>v. Holden</i>	925 a
<i>v. Stewart</i>	751, 763, 769, 795, 796, 798	<i>v. Olmius</i>	1382
Denyer v. Druce	1167	<i>v. Samson</i>	1087 a
Derby, Earl of, v. Duke of Athol	1293	<i>v. Saville</i>	1015
Derry Bank v. Heath	893 a	Doan v. Mauzey	793 s
Desbody v. Boyville	284	Doane v. Badger	1235
Desborough v. Harris	814	<i>v. Russell</i>	1030
Devane v. Larkins	604 a	Dobbyn's case	1476
Devaynes v. Noble	162, 459 a, 676	Dobson v. Racey	316, 321, 322
<i>v. Robinson</i>	1061 a	Docker v. Soames	465, 1262
Devenish v. Baines	781	Dodd v. Cook	440 b
<i>v. Barnes</i>	256, 664	<i>v. Hartford</i>	959 a
Devereaux v. Burgoyne	386	Doddingtown v. Hallett	466, 1242
Deverell v. Lord Bolton	203 b	Dodds v. Wilson	236
Devese v. Pontet	1106, 1115, 1122	Dodge v. Strong	895
Devis v. Turnbull	1514	Dodkin v. Brunt	1273 g
Devonsher v. Newenham	859, 1447	Dodsley v. Kinnersley	738
Devonshire's case	445	<i>v. Varley</i>	1216, 1218, 1231
Dew v. Clarke	1508, 1516	Doe v. Ball	371
Dewdney, <i>ex parte</i>	1520, 1521 a	<i>v. Bancks</i>	1323
Dewey v. Allen	1268	<i>v. Doe</i>	770 b
Dewitt v. Schoonmaker	592, 604	<i>v. Gay</i>	591
Dey v. Dunham	1036 a	<i>v. Joinville</i>	1072, 1074
Dexter v. Arnold	1516, 1520	<i>v. Manning</i>	352, 426
Dhegetoft v. London Assur. Co.	1057 a, 1057 b	<i>v. Polgrean</i>	1402
Dias v. Bouchand	499 d	<i>v. Routledge</i>	352, 353, 355, 356, 359, 362, 426
Dibble v. Scott	1050	<i>v. Rusham</i>	352
Dick v. Milligan	1456	<i>v. Sandham</i>	102
<i>v. Swinton</i>	1473	<i>v. Staples</i>	1388, 1390
Dickey v. Beatty	138 k	<i>v. Smith</i>	1074
<i>v. Thompson</i>	1233 a	<i>v. Woodhouse</i>	1067 b
Dickinson v. Dickinson	1133	Doe d. v. Grew	1067 b
<i>v. Grand J. Canal Co.</i>	927 a	<i>v. Jessup</i>	1074 c
<i>v. Lockyer</i>	422	<i>v. Jones</i>	959 e
Dickson, <i>in re</i>	287	<i>v. McKeay</i>	959 e
<i>v. Montgomery</i>	1154 c	Doggett v. Emerson	193
<i>v. Robinson</i>	1088 a	Dolan v. Macdermot	1494 f
Dickson's Trust	291 d	Dole v. Lincoln	606
Dietrichster v. Colburn	958	Dolman v. Nokes	212 a
Digby v. Cornwallis	542		

Doloret v. Rothschild	717, 717 a, 719, 724, 724 a, 776	Drew v. Lord Narbury	397
Dolton v. Hewen	1064 b, 1131	v. Power	527
Donaldson v. Donaldson	793 c	Drewe v. Hanson	777, 778, 780
v. Gillot	390 a	Drewry v. Thacker	550
Donallen v. Lenox	291 b	Drinkwater v. Drinkwater	376
Done's case	519, 1475	Drohan v. Drohan	422
Donegal's case	238	Droun v. Smith	518 b
Donne v. Hart	1402, 1410, 1413	Druce v. Dennison	1412
v. Lewis	571, 577	Druiff v. Parker	164 h
Doolin v. Ward	293	Drummond v. Attorney General	1191 a
Doolittle v. Hilton	1449 c	v. Pigou	892
v. Lewis	1027	v. Tracy	212 a
Doolubdass v. Ramlohl	294	Drury v. Drury	466
Door v. Geary	180	v. Hook	261, 263
Doran v. Simpson	423, 581	v. Smith	607 a, 607 d
Dorchester, Lord, v. Earl of Effing- ham	1088	Drysdale v. Mace	769
Dorison v. Westbrook	724	v. Piggott	638 a
Dormer v. Fortescue	83, 84, 252, 511, 513, 625, 626, 628, 862	Dubois v. Hole	1368
Dormer's case	1364	Dubost, <i>ex parte</i>	793 a, 1111, 1113, 1117, 1118
Dornford v. Dornford	1277	Duchess of Newcastle v. Pelham	703
Dorr v. Shaw	559, 560, 634, 642	Duddell v. Simpson	736 c
Dorset v. Girdler	1507, 1508	Dudley v. Dickson	1210
Doty v. Whittlesey	89	v. Dudley	629, 998
Doughty v. Bull	790	v. Mallery	709
Douglas v. Clay	549	& Ward v. Dudley	629
v. Culverwell	337 b	Duff v. Dalzel	174
v. Fellows	1074 a	Duffield v. Elwes	606, 607 a, 607 c, 705 a to 706 a, 793 a
v. Russell	1040 b, 1055	Duffy v. Calvert	1127
v. Satterlee	1280 a	Dufour v. Ferara	785
v. Willis	1109	Duggan v. Kelly	291 d
v. Wiggins	913	Duhume v. Young	432 b
Doungsworth v. Blair	168, 1040 c	Duignan v. Walker	951 d
Dove v. Dove	959	Duke of Beaufort v. Neeld	737 a
Dover v. Buck	1277 e	v. Patrick	1536
v. Gregory	1246, 1247, 1247 a	Bedford v. British Museum	737, 750, 926 a
Dow v. Jewell	982 a	Bolton v. Williams	808, 811
v. Kerr	114	Chandos v. Talbot	783
v. Sayword	677	Norfolk v. Myers	855
Dowbiggin v. Bourne	493, 499 to 499 c	Dumas, <i>ex parte</i>	1258
Dowdale's case	583	Dummer v. Corporation of Chip- penham	1500, 1501
Dowell v. Dew	1388	Dunbar v. Tredenrick	315, 345
v. Jacks	1365	Duncan v. Duncan	1423, 1424, 1426, 1476
Dowling v. Betjemann	719 b	v. Fish's Adm'rs	564 b
Downam v. Matthews	1431, 1435	v. Lyon	442, 449, 451, 504, 895, 1434, 1437, 1440, 1451
Downe v. Morris	1023	v. McCullough	203 a
Downes v. Timperon	1392	v. Warrell	700
Dowson v. Hardcastle	814, 815	Dunch v. Kent	1038
Doyle v. Blake	1281	Duncomb v. Duncomb	993
Doyle v. Perfull	1440	Duncomb v. Greenacre	1408 a
Drake v. Hudson River Railroad Co.	924 a, 927	v. Mayer	703
Drakeford v. Walker	256	Duncuft v. Albrecht	724, 724 a
Draper v. Borlau	390	Duncumban v. Stein	603
Drapers' Co. v. Davis	312	v. Stint	541
v. Yardloy	400		
Drew v. Clarke	138 f		

- Dundas *v.* Dutens 367, 374, 768, 987 *a*
 Dungey *v.* Angove 809, 811, 812
 Dunham *v.* Downer 1573
 v. Gillis 504
 Dunk *v.* Fenner 1067 *b*
 Dunklee *v.* Adams 1324, 1326 *a*
 Dunklin *v.* Wilkins 1040 *g*
 Dunn *v.* Chambers 238
 v. Coates 1495
 Dunnage *v.* White 121, 129 to 133,
 232
 Dunne *v.* Dunne 1196 *b*
 Dunscomb *v.* Dunscomb 1277, 1278
 Dupre *v.* Thompson 137, 138 *f*
 Durant *v.* Bacot 164 *g*
 v. Durant 152, 160
 v. Titley 1428
 Durell *v.* Pritchard 927 *b*
 Durham & Sunderland Railway
 Co. *v.* Wawn 959 *b*
 Dursley *v.* Fitzhardinge 1490, 1503,
 1510, 1511
 Dutton *v.* Furness 820 *b*
 v. Morrison 675, 677
 v. Pool 780
 Duvall *v.* Craig 975 *a*
 v. Terre 975 *a*, 1316 *a*
 Duvalle *v.* Ross 74
 Dyer *v.* Dyer 1198, 1201 to 1203
 v. Hargrave 777, 778, 796
 v. Kearsley 550
 Dyers' Company *v.* King 951 *h*
- E.
- Eade *v.* Eade 1070, 1073
 Eaden *v.* Firth 925 *a*
 Eades *v.* Harris 908
 Eager *v.* Barnes 1273 *d*
 Earl *v.* Halsey 736 *c*
 v. Stocker 1451
 Earl of Alesford's case 763
 Arglasse *v.* Muschamp 744,
 899, 1294
 Bath *v.* Sherwin 859
 Darlington *v.* Bowes 859
 v. Pulteney 1092
 Glengall *v.* Barnard 1105, 1110
 Kildare *v.* Eustace 744, 899,
 1292, 1293
 Milltown *v.* Stewart 695, 695 *a*
 Oxford *v.* Tyrrell 44
 Pembroke *v.* Beighden 790
 Powlett *v.* Herbert 1263
 East *v.* Cook 1090, 1091
 v. Thornbury 111
 East Anglian *v.* Eastern Counties
 Railway 959 *f*
- East India Co. *v.* Campion 824,
 1316 *a*, 1521
 v. Boddam 64 *i*, 79 to
 82, 86, 88
 v. Donald 147, 167,
 1528
 v. Henchman 462
 v. Neave 167, 295, 298
 v. Tritton 111
 v. Vincent 388
 Eastabrook *v.* Scott 271, 379
 Eastern Counties Railway *v.*
 Hawkes 959 *b*
 Eastland *v.* Reynolds 257, 287
 Eastman *v.* Company 925 *f*
 v. Plumer 793 *u*
 Eastwood *v.* Vincke 1100
 Easum *v.* Cato 1435
 Eaton College *v.* Beauchamp 87, 684
 Eaton *v.* Barton 1122
 v. Eaton 138 *k*
 v. Lyon 1323, 1326 *a*
 v. Whittaker 761
 Eaves *v.* Hickson 1277 *e*
 Ebrand *v.* Dancer 1201, 1201 *a*, 1204
 Echliif *v.* Baldwin 908, 953
 Eddie *v.* Davidson 677
 Eddy *v.* Traver 499 *d*
 Ede *v.* Knowles 361
 Edelen *v.* Dent 1122
 Eden *v.* Smyth 705 *a*
 Edensor *v.* Roberts 814
 Edes *v.* Brereton 1358
 v. Edes 1404, 1411
 Edinburgh, &c. Railway Co. *v.*
 Philip 293 *c*
 Edgewell *v.* Haywood 368
 Edleston *v.* Vick 951 *a*
 Edmonds *v.* Plews 292
 Appeal 138 *k*
 Edmons *v.* Crenshaw 1280 *a*, 1283
 Edmunds *v.* Fessey 1065 *c*
 v. Waugh 488 *a*
 Edsell *v.* Buchanan 64 *a*
 Edwards *v.* Abrey 1424
 v. Browne 336
 v. Burt 337 *a*
 v. Child 158
 v. Countess of Warwick 84,
 479, 793
 v. Edwards 604 *a*
 v. Freeman 90, 92, 503,
 575, 1003
 v. Grand Junction R.
 Co. 293 *b*
 v. Graves 540
 v. Janes 1521 *b*
 v. Jones 433, 606, 706 *a*,
 793 *a*, 793 *b*

Edwards v. Moore	1201	Emerson v. Udall	887, 1452 c
v. Morgan	1097	Emery v. Hill	1186, 1300
v. Myrick	310, 313, 314, 321	v. Lawrence	1040-1056
v. Parkhurst	1057 c	v. Wase	734, 1451, 1454, 1459
Edwin v. East India Co.	158, 1307	Emmet v. Dewhurst	116
Egberts v. Wood	1036 a	Emmons v. Cairns	845
Eland v. Eland	1127 a, 1130, 1131, 1131 a, 1132	Emperor of Austria v. Kossuth	951 e
Elder v. Elder	161	Empringham v. Short	833 a
Eldred v. Hazlett	1540	Enders v. Brune	499 p
Eldridge v. Eldridge	632 a	v. Williams	432 b
v. Hill	853, 854, 859, 860, 901	England v. Carling	669, 722
v. Smith	711 a	v. Downs	273
Elibank v. Montelieu	1414	<i>in re</i>	1355
Ellard v. Llandaff	206, 769, 778	English v. Miller	900
Elliot v. Brown	674	Ensign v. Kellogg	715, 751
v. Collier	532	Eppes v. Randolph	499 d
v. Davenport	705 a	Equitable Ins. Co. v. Fuller	1269 a
v. Ince	228	Era Insurance Co. <i>in re</i>	1559 i
v. Merryman	422	Ernest v. Croysdill	1261 a
v. Porter	555 a	v. Vivian	1520 d
Elliott v. Balcom	1575	Errickson v. Nesmith	499 e, 1252 b
v. Cordell	1408, 1411 to 1413, 1424	Errington v. Attorney General	809
v. Edwards	1226	v. Aynesley	716, 726, 799, 1314
v. McClelland	1049	Erving's case	583
v. Merriman	1064 b, 1127, 1129, 1131	Erwin v. Parham	246
v. Turner	1314	Esdale v. Stevenson	777
Ellis v. Atkinson	1394	Espin v. Pemberton	408, 1020 a
v. Commander	710	Essell v. Hayward	673
v. Earl Grey	1040 f	Essex v. Atkins	1390, 1395
v. Ellis	1403, 1414	v. Berry	1574
v. Lewis	1088 a	Estes v. Mansfield	1456 a
v. Nimmo	170, 176, 372, 433, 793 b, 973, 987, 988, 1040 c	Estwick v. Caillard	1036
v. Selby	1157, 1164	Etches v. Lance	1468, 1474
v. Woods	407, 1380	Etting v. Bank of United States	214, 215, 324
Ellison v. Chapman	665	Etty v. Bridges	421 b, 1035 a, 1057
v. Cookson	1111, 1114	European and Am. Sub. Tel. Co.	
v. Ellison	133, 529, 706 a, 787, 793 a, 987, 1287	v. Elliott	793 l
v. Elwyn	1412	Evans v. Bicknell	181, 184, 191, 192, 197, 204, 387, 390 to 399, 1020
Elmendorf v. Taylor	975, 1520	v. Bremridge	164 a, 498 b
Elmsley v. Macauley	828	v. Charles	1065 b
v. Young	1065 b, 1065 c	v. Cheshire	344
Elter, <i>ex parte</i>	675	v. Ellis	311
Elton v. Elton	290, 1067 b	v. Evans	1427, 1530
v. Shepard	1394	v. Harris	756
Elwin v. Elwin	790	v. Llewellyn	120, 130, 134, 239, 251
v. Williams	1412	v. Kneeland	215
Elworthy v. Bird	1428	v. Smallcombe	1539 a
Ely v. McCay	793 t	v. Strode	138 f
Emanuel v. Bird	676	v. Wood	724 b
Emerson v. Davies	940, 942	Evelyn v. Evelyn	571, 574 to 576, 1064, 1065, 1228
v. Gilman	1018 e	v. Lewis	833 a
v. Staton	74 c	Everard v. Warren	1528
		Everert v. Ritchie	1452 d
		Evertson v. Booth	499

Evertson <i>v.</i> Tappan	322, 1211, 1277	Farnham <i>v.</i> Phillips	1115
Evitt <i>v.</i> Price	952	Farnsworth <i>v.</i> Childs	397
Evroy <i>v.</i> Nichols	385	Farrand <i>v.</i> Marshall	929
Ewelme Hospital <i>v.</i> Andover	854, 855	Farrish <i>v.</i> Wilson	591
Ewen <i>v.</i> Bannerman	1164	Farquharson <i>v.</i> Cave	606
Ewer <i>v.</i> Corbett	422, 1128, 1129	<i>v.</i> Pitcher	894
<i>v.</i> Moyle	475 <i>a</i>	Farr <i>v.</i> Middleton	1231
Eyre <i>v.</i> Bartop	883	<i>v.</i> Newman	551
<i>v.</i> Countess of Shaftsbury	1143,	<i>v.</i> Newnham	579
	1147, 1190, 1328, 1333,	<i>v.</i> Sheriffe	64 <i>e</i>
	1339, 1340, 1352, 1358,	Farrant <i>v.</i> Lovel	913, 914
	1359, 1361, 1362	Farrington <i>v.</i> Knightly	493, 532, 540,
<i>v.</i> Dolphin	397, 400, 400 <i>a</i>		595, 596, 1208
<i>v.</i> Eyre	372 <i>b</i>	Farrors <i>v.</i> Rees	399, 1020
<i>v.</i> Good	1459	Farwell <i>v.</i> Jacobs	592
<i>v.</i> Ivison	757	<i>v.</i> Meyas	793 <i>r</i>
<i>v.</i> Popham	755	Faubault <i>v.</i> Taylor	604 <i>a</i>
Eyres <i>v.</i> Brodrick	1449	Faulder <i>v.</i> Silk	227
Eyton <i>v.</i> Eyton	252	Faulkner <i>v.</i> Daniel	486, 487
		<i>v.</i> Hebard	1558
		Faversham <i>v.</i> Ryder	1068 <i>b</i>
		Fawcett <i>v.</i> Gee	379
		<i>v.</i> Lowther	1196 <i>b</i>
		<i>v.</i> Whitehouse	1207, 1260
		Fawell <i>v.</i> Healis	1226, 1228
		Fazakerly <i>v.</i> Gillibrand	1109
		Fearon, <i>ex parte</i>	440
		Featherstonehaugh <i>v.</i> Fenwick	672
		Featherstonehaugh <i>v.</i> Turner	669 <i>a</i>
		Fellows <i>v.</i> Fellows	1262
		<i>v.</i> Lord Gwydyr	203
		<i>v.</i> Mitchell	1280 to 1282
		Fells <i>v.</i> Reed	709, 906
		Fenhoulet <i>v.</i> Passavant	565
		Fenn <i>v.</i> Edmonds	814
		Fenner <i>v.</i> Taylor	1417, 1418
		Fenton <i>v.</i> Browne	199
		<i>v.</i> Hughes	1499, 1501
		Fereyes <i>v.</i> Robinson	1248 <i>c</i>
		Fergus <i>v.</i> Gore	1521 <i>a</i>
		Ferguson <i>v.</i> Paschall	724
		<i>v.</i> Waters	71, 74
		<i>v.</i> Wilson	778 <i>g</i>
		Fermor, <i>ex parte</i>	1268 <i>a</i>
		Ferrand <i>v.</i> Prentice	603
		Ferrars <i>v.</i> Cherry	400, 410
		Ferrer <i>v.</i> Barrett	639
		Ferrers <i>v.</i> Sherley	549
		<i>v.</i> Tanner	684
		Ferres <i>v.</i> Ferres	229
		<i>v.</i> Newly	684
		Ferris <i>v.</i> Adams	294
		<i>v.</i> Crawford	196
		Ferson <i>v.</i> Monroe	677
		<i>v.</i> Sanger	197, 796
		Fettiplace <i>v.</i> Gorges	784, 1390, 1392
		Feversham <i>v.</i> Watson	773
		Field <i>v.</i> Beaumont	895, 928, 929
		<i>v.</i> Craig	466

F.

Fabre <i>v.</i> Colden	1408
Failey <i>v.</i> Shippam	744
Fairbanks <i>v.</i> Lampson	1494 <i>f</i>
Fairbrother <i>v.</i> Nerot	807, 808, 814
<i>v.</i> Prattent	807, 808, 814
Fairchild <i>v.</i> Adams	1454
<i>v.</i> Hunt	1637 <i>a</i>
Fairfax <i>v.</i> Fairfax	1280 <i>a</i>
Falcke <i>v.</i> Gray	719 <i>a</i>
Falis <i>v.</i> Conway	1018 <i>b</i>
Falkland <i>v.</i> Bertie	61
Falkner <i>v.</i> O'Brien	239
Fall River Iron Works <i>v.</i> Croase	1036 <i>a</i>
Falls <i>v.</i> Robinson	895
Falls Village W. P. Co. <i>v.</i> Tibbetts	925 <i>f</i>
Falmouth, Lord, <i>v.</i> Innys	860, 929
Fanar <i>v.</i> Earle	1214 <i>a</i>
Fanning, <i>in re</i>	1273 <i>b</i>
Fanning <i>v.</i> Dunham	301, 695
Farebrother <i>v.</i> Gibson	203 <i>b</i> , 1537
<i>v.</i> Wodehouse	
Farewell <i>v.</i> Coker	120, 130, 134, 145
Farina <i>v.</i> Silverlock	951 <i>c</i>
Farley <i>v.</i> Farley	710
<i>v.</i> Woodburn	241
Farmer <i>v.</i> Arundell	1256
<i>v.</i> Dean	1277 <i>e</i>
<i>v.</i> Farmer	239
<i>v.</i> Russell	1041
Farmers' & Mech. Bank <i>v.</i> Rathbone	498 <i>a</i>
Farmers' Loan & Trust Co. <i>v.</i> Maltby	404
Farnham <i>v.</i> Brooks	316 <i>a</i> 321 to 323

Field <i>v.</i> Evans	309 <i>a</i>	Fletcher <i>v.</i> Green	1273 <i>d</i>
<i>v.</i> Maghee	1040 <i>c</i>	<i>v.</i> Jackson	138 <i>f</i>
<i>v.</i> Moore	1080 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Peck	381, 424
<i>v.</i> Schieffelin	1128	<i>v.</i> Warren	887
<i>v.</i> Sowle 1394, 1396, 1399, 1401		Flight <i>v.</i> Bolland	723, 751, 787
Fielden <i>v.</i> Fielden	550	<i>v.</i> Cook	603, 730, 847, 955
Fielding <i>v.</i> Bound	1179	<i>v.</i> Leman	1048 <i>a</i>
Fiestel <i>v.</i> King's College	1040 <i>c</i>	Flint <i>v.</i> Brandon	716, 726, 727
Fifty Associates <i>v.</i> Tudor	827 <i>a</i>	<i>ex parte</i>	1435
Filmer <i>v.</i> Gott	154, 236	Flockton <i>v.</i> Peake	442 <i>a</i>
Finch <i>v.</i> Brown	1016 <i>a</i>	Flood <i>v.</i> Finley	161
<i>v.</i> Earl of Winchelsea	553,	Flower <i>v.</i> Martin	433, 705 to 706 <i>a</i>
1217, 1228, 1249		Floyd <i>v.</i> Jane	888
<i>v.</i> Finch 1201, 1203, 1483, 1490,		<i>v.</i> Priestler	525
1494, 1497		Floyer <i>v.</i> Sydenham	1493
<i>v.</i> Hattersly	1247 <i>a</i>	Foden <i>v.</i> Finney	1421 <i>a</i> , 1422
<i>v.</i> Newnham	254	Foler <i>v.</i> Russell	82
<i>v.</i> Tucker	989	Foley <i>v.</i> Burnell	604, 844
Finden <i>v.</i> Stephens	1068	<i>v.</i> Foley	1408 <i>a</i>
Findon <i>v.</i> Parker	1048 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Hill	74 <i>c</i> , 458, 459, 1520
Finley <i>v.</i> Lynn	158	Follett <i>v.</i> Follett	173
Firemen's Ins. Co. <i>v.</i> Bay	1380	<i>v.</i> Reese	1226
Firth <i>v.</i> Ridley	793 <i>l</i>	Folliet <i>v.</i> Ogden	640
Fish <i>v.</i> Howland	1226	Folsom <i>v.</i> Marsh	939, 943, 947
Fisher <i>v.</i> Chapin	1277	Foly's case	553, 554
<i>v.</i> Dixon	710 <i>a</i>	Fontain <i>v.</i> Ravenel	1154 <i>c</i>
<i>v.</i> Fields	968, 974, 980	Footner <i>v.</i> Sturgis	1627 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Johnson	1228	Forbes <i>v.</i> Ball	1068, 1071
<i>v.</i> Shaw	715	<i>v.</i> Dennister	397
Fishmongers' Co. <i>v.</i> East India Co.		<i>v.</i> Moffatt	1035 <i>b</i>
925, 927		<i>v.</i> Peacock	1060
Fisk <i>v.</i> Cleland	203 <i>f</i> , 203 <i>g</i> , 229 <i>b</i> ,	<i>v.</i> Ross	322, 1211
440 <i>c</i>		Ford <i>v.</i> Fowler	1068, 1068 <i>a</i> , 1069
<i>v.</i> Norton	548	<i>v.</i> Peering	703, 704, 707, 1504
<i>v.</i> Wilber	925, 927	Fordyce <i>v.</i> Willis	972
Fiske <i>v.</i> Wilbraham, &c. Co.	1452 <i>d</i>	Forman <i>v.</i> Humphrey	671
Fitch <i>v.</i> Fitch	344	Formbey <i>v.</i> Prior	293 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Peckham	1222	Forrest <i>v.</i> Elwes	717 <i>a</i> , 723, 724, 796,
Fitter <i>v.</i> Lord Macclesfield	1520	798, 1263	
Fitzer <i>v.</i> Fitzer	359, 363	<i>v.</i> Forrest	1469
Fitzgerald <i>v.</i> Falconberg	408	Forrester <i>v.</i> Cotton	1086, 1093
<i>in re</i> 1336, 1364, 1365		<i>v.</i> Leigh	565
<i>v.</i> Peck	125, 138 <i>f</i>	Forshaw <i>v.</i> Welsby	706 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Rainsford	239	Forster <i>v.</i> Forster	989, 1249
<i>v.</i> Reed	228	<i>v.</i> Hale	764, 765
<i>v.</i> Stewart	1041, 1045	Fortescue <i>v.</i> Burnett	176, 372, 433,
Fitzhugh <i>v.</i> Lee	1514	706 <i>a</i> , 793 <i>a</i> , 793 <i>b</i>	
Fitzsimmons <i>v.</i> Guester	64 <i>c</i> , 64 <i>d</i>	<i>v.</i> Hennah	273
<i>v.</i> Joslin 193, 212 <i>d</i> , 243 <i>a</i>		Forth <i>v.</i> Chapman	1067 <i>a</i> , 1067 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Ogden	410, 1502	Foss <i>v.</i> Haynes	746
Flack <i>v.</i> Holm 1467, 1470, 1473 to 1475		Foster <i>v.</i> Athneim	499 <i>d</i>
Flagg <i>v.</i> Mann 400, 400 <i>a</i> , 755, 1502,		<i>v.</i> Blackstone	421 <i>a</i> , 1035 <i>a</i> ,
1528		1047, 1057, 1227, 1233	
Flarty <i>v.</i> Odlum	1040 <i>d</i> , 1040 <i>f</i>	<i>v.</i> Blagnen	1180
Flavell <i>v.</i> Harrison	951 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Charles	193
Fleming <i>v.</i> Beaser	499 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> Cockerill	1035 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> McKesson	543 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Cook	565, 1088, 1088 <i>a</i>
Fletcher <i>v.</i> Ashburner	64 <i>g</i> , 790, 1212	<i>v.</i> Deacon	1039
<i>v.</i> Fletcher 735 <i>a</i> , 1425, 1428		<i>v.</i> Denny	1339

Foster <i>v.</i> Donald	672	Freeman <i>v.</i> Fairlee	703, 704, 841, 842, 1270, 1275
<i>v.</i> Foster	1249, 1277	<i>v.</i> Lomas	1437
<i>v.</i> Fox	1047	<i>v.</i> Okey	555 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Hilliard	487, 488 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Pontrell	44
<i>v.</i> Hodgson	529, 1520	Freemantle <i>v.</i> Banks	1115
<i>v.</i> Munt	1208	Freemault <i>v.</i> Dedire	553, 1249
<i>v.</i> Roberts	337 <i>b</i>	Freke <i>v.</i> Lord Barrington	1085
<i>v.</i> Spencer	458	Fremont <i>v.</i> Stone	793 <i>r</i>
<i>v.</i> State Bank	894	French <i>v.</i> Chichester	1131
<i>v.</i> Swasey	57, 71	<i>v.</i> Davies	1088
<i>v.</i> Vassall	744, 899, 1295	<i>v.</i> French	372 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Wood	895	<i>v.</i> Macale	1314
Fothergill <i>v.</i> Fothergill	166, 169, 793 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> Shotwell	1575
Fowkes <i>v.</i> Chadd	1447	Frere <i>v.</i> Moore	419
Fowle <i>v.</i> Lawrason	456	Freetly <i>v.</i> Barnhart	798 <i>v</i>
Fowler, <i>in re</i>	1365 <i>a</i>	Frewin <i>v.</i> Lewis	955 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Adams	164 <i>f</i>	Frier <i>v.</i> Peacock	1169
<i>v.</i> Bott	102	Frietas <i>v.</i> Don Santos	70, 458, 461
<i>v.</i> Fowler	1120, 1396	Frink <i>v.</i> Buss	1035 <i>g</i>
<i>v.</i> Garlike	979 <i>a</i> , 1164, 1183, 1196 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Lawrence	927
Fox <i>v.</i> Hanbury	677	Frith <i>v.</i> Cartland	1261 <i>d</i>
<i>v.</i> Mackreth	148, 205, 207, 236, 308, 315, 321	<i>v.</i> Sprague	140
<i>v.</i> Wright	342, 347	Frogley <i>v.</i> Phillips	1065 <i>c</i>
Foxcraft <i>v.</i> Lister	761	Frost <i>v.</i> Beekman	403, 404, 420
<i>v.</i> Parris	519	<i>v.</i> Belmont	1252 <i>a</i>
Frail <i>v.</i> Ellis	1226	Frowd <i>v.</i> Lawrence	891
Frakes <i>v.</i> Brown	700	Fry <i>v.</i> Porter	18, 288
Frame <i>v.</i> Dawson	760, 762, 763, 765	Fryer <i>v.</i> Bernard	899
Frampton <i>v.</i> Frampton	1427	<i>v.</i> Butler	604
Francis <i>v.</i> Felmot	240	Fulham <i>v.</i> Jones	790
<i>v.</i> Francis	1233 <i>a</i>	Fullager <i>v.</i> Clark	190
<i>v.</i> Wigsell	1397	Fuller <i>v.</i> Gibson	814
Franco <i>v.</i> Alvares	593, 602	<i>v.</i> Hovey	771
<i>v.</i> Bolton	296, 697, 699, 1494	<i>v.</i> Redman	1521 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Franco	1410	<i>v.</i> Wilson	193
Frank <i>v.</i> Frank	111, 113, 132, 1097	<i>v.</i> Yates	1088
<i>v.</i> Lady Standish	1077	Fulton Bank <i>v.</i> N. Y. & Sharon Canal Co.	74 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Mainwaring	229 <i>a</i>	Furnival <i>v.</i> Carew	722, 729
Franklin Bank <i>v.</i> Cooper	216	Fursor <i>v.</i> Penton	1370, 1371
Franklin <i>v.</i> Hosier	1216	Futrill <i>v.</i> Futrill	440 <i>c</i>
<i>v.</i> Osgood	1061, 1062	Fyfe <i>v.</i> Swaby	724
<i>v.</i> Ridenhour	1521 <i>a</i>	Fyler <i>v.</i> Fyler	1268, 1273
<i>v.</i> Thomas	678		
Franklyn <i>v.</i> Tuton	729	G.	
Franks <i>v.</i> Weaver	951	Gage <i>v.</i> Acton	1370
Fraser <i>v.</i> Kershaw	676 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Newmarket Railway	959 <i>f</i>
<i>v.</i> McClenacher	710	Gaines <i>v.</i> Chew	184, 440
Frazer <i>v.</i> Thompson	372 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Gaines	1423 <i>a</i>
Freake <i>v.</i> Cranefeldt	1521 <i>a</i>	Gainesborough <i>v.</i> Gifford	879, 894, 1574
Frederick <i>v.</i> Aynscomb	1449	Gale <i>v.</i> Leckie	665
<i>v.</i> Coxwell	733, 734	<i>v.</i> Lindo	266, 270
Freeland <i>v.</i> Heron	526	<i>v.</i> Luttrell	1436
Freelove <i>v.</i> Cole	440 <i>e</i>	<i>v.</i> Williamson	365
Freeman <i>v.</i> Bishop	331, 348	Gallatiani <i>v.</i> Cunningham	307
<i>v.</i> Boynton	111		
<i>v.</i> Cooke	1539		
<i>v.</i> Curtis	138 <i>l</i>		

Gallejo v. Attorney General	1154, 1156	Gayer v. Wilkinson	1411
Galloway v. Holmes	203 a	Geary v. Norton	933
Galt v. Jackson	298	Geast v. Barker	379
Galton v. Hancock	562, 570, 571	Gedge v. Traill	840
Gammon v. Stone	493, 499 b, 638	Gedye v. Matson	499
Gann v. Gregory	1449 a	v. The Duke of Montrose	769 a
Ganse, <i>in re</i>	1365 a	Gee, <i>ex parte</i>	499 d
Garbut v. Hilton	290	v. Pritchard	944, 945, 948
Gardiner v. Astor	1035 b	Geiger v. Grier	736 a
Gardner v. ———	1470	Gell v. Vermedun	740
v. Adams	1040 g	Gelpeke v. Blake	138 k
<i>ex parte</i>	1418	Gelston v. Hoyt	74, 74 a, 74 b, 74 c, 1495, 1497
v. Gardner	1130, 1372 a 1397, 1400	General Smith, The	1241
v. Marshall	1421 a	Gengell v. Horne	184
v. Morse	292	Gent v. Harrison	518 a
v. Parker	607 a	George v. Kent	1233 b
v. Pullen	724	v. Milbank	176, 361
v. Shore	372 b	v. Wood	1035 g
v. Townsend	1231	George's Creek Co. v. Detmold	927
v. Village of Newburgh	927	German v. Machin	751
v. Walker	1403, 1414	Gervis v. Gervis	565, 571
Garforth v. Fearon	295	Gest v. Frazier	239
Garland v. Salem Bank	140	Getman's Exr's v. Beardsley	158
Garlick v. James	1033	Ghost v. Waller	1268
Garrard v. Frankel	164 c	Gibbens v. Baddall	1226
v. Grining	161	Gibbon v. Parker	1452 d
v. Lord Lauderdale	793 b, 972, 1036 a, 1036 b, 1045, 1058, 1196	Gibbons v. Caunt	131
Garrett v. Pretty	289	v. Dawley	542
v. White	650	Gibbs v. Holmes	1521
Garrow v. Brown	440 c	v. Lawrence	1074 g
Garson v. Green	1217, 1224, 1226	v. Marsh	98
Garth v. Cotton	184, 511, 517, 518, 913, 914, 991 to 994	v. Rumsey	1164
v. Ward	405	Gibert v. Peteler	959 i, 959 k
Garthshore v. Chalie	1106, 1107, 1115, 1210	Gibson v. Crekore	487, 632
Gartside v. Gartside	1451	<i>ex parte</i>	1476
v. Isherwood	218, 220, 235 to 238, 246, 308	v. Finley	1044
Gascoigne v. Douglass	1293	v. Gibson	1088 a
Gascoyne v. Thuring	1201	v. Goldthwaite	817 a
Gasgal v. Smith	769	v. Head	203 f
Gaskeld v. Durdin	908	v. Ingo	399, 703
v. Durdine	405, 406	v. Jeyes	310 to 313, 321, 324, 1365
Gaskell v. Chambers	1564	v. Patterson	776
v. Gaskell	652, 656, 656 a, 793 a, 973, 1005	v. Russell	314
v. Sino	1233 b	v. Scudamore	1357
Gason v. Wordsworth	1516	v. Wells	917
Gass v. Stinson	459 a, 459 c, 459 d	v. Winter	1056
Gaston v. Frankum	1401	Giddings v. Eastman	1261, 1262
Gause v. Perkins	929	Gifford, <i>ex parte</i>	112, 326, 498 a, 499
Gaward v. Lord Lauderdale	1036 a	v. Hart	838
Gawler v. Standerwick	603	v. New Jersey Rail. Co.	1560
Gay v. Baker	604 a	Gilbee v. Gilbee	1364
v. Pitman	824	Gilbert v. Bennett	1073
		v. Colt	1469
		v. East Newark Co.	761
		v. Gilbert	125, 138 f
		v. Lewis	1397 a
		v. Mickle	926

Gilbert <i>v.</i> Sykes	294	Goodman <i>v.</i> Sayers	111, 131, 1456
Gilchrist <i>v.</i> Cator	1414, 1424	<i>v.</i> Whitcomb	669, 673
Giles <i>v.</i> Giles	180, 182 <i>a</i>	Goodrich <i>v.</i> Proctor	1130
Gilham <i>v.</i> Locke	274	<i>v.</i> Shotbolt	824
Gill <i>v.</i> Attorney General	1284	Goodright <i>v.</i> Parker	990
<i>v.</i> Lyon	1233 <i>a</i>	Goodtitle <i>v.</i> Bailey	1080
<i>v.</i> Shelley	1065 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> Otway	52
Gillespie <i>v.</i> Moon	152, 153, 156, 157, 161	Goodwin <i>v.</i> Finlayson	1074 <i>b</i>
Gillett <i>v.</i> Peppercorne	316	<i>v.</i> Goodwin	176, 433
Gilliam <i>v.</i> Esselman	327	Goodyear <i>v.</i> Day	934
Gillott <i>v.</i> Kettle	951 <i>a</i>	Gordon <i>v.</i> Close	1510
Gilman <i>v.</i> Browne	506, 1226	<i>v.</i> Gordon	113, 124, 131, 132, 147, 148, 150, 217, 326
<i>v.</i> Daunt	604 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Graham	1023 <i>a</i>
Gilmore <i>v.</i> N. Am. Land Co.	362	<i>v.</i> Lewis	1434, 1436
Gilpin <i>v.</i> Lady Southampton	547, 549	<i>v.</i> Potter	1347 <i>b</i>
Girling <i>v.</i> Lee	552, 553	<i>v.</i> Simkinson	520
Gitings <i>v.</i> McDermot	1065 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> Uxbridge	161
Givens <i>v.</i> Calder	765	Gore <i>v.</i> Brazier	434
Gladstone <i>v.</i> Birley	1216 <i>a</i> , 1217, 1237	<i>v.</i> Gibson	230
<i>v.</i> Hadwen	1038	<i>v.</i> Knight	1387
<i>v.</i> Mussurus Bey	959 <i>f</i>	<i>v.</i> Stackpole	1026
<i>v.</i> Ottoman Bank	959 <i>f</i>	Goring <i>v.</i> Bickerstaff	1040
Glasgow College <i>v.</i> The Attorney General	1191 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Nash	693, 986 to 988
Glasscott <i>v.</i> Copper Miner's Co.	1501	Goslington <i>v.</i> Warburton	1080
Gleason <i>v.</i> Lillie	1284 <i>b</i>	Goss <i>v.</i> Stinson	459 <i>b</i>
Glegg <i>v.</i> Legh	1490	<i>v.</i> Tracey	256
Glenorchy <i>v.</i> Bosville	983	Gossmour <i>v.</i> Pigge	131
Glissen <i>v.</i> Ogden	309	Gott <i>v.</i> Atkinson	551, 554
Glyn <i>v.</i> Duesbury	806	Gould <i>v.</i> Gould	184, 238, 440, 1520
Glynn <i>v.</i> Bank of England	85, 1527	<i>v.</i> Okeden	239
<i>v.</i> Baster	1390	Gourlay <i>v.</i> Somerset	1457
<i>v.</i> Houston	1494	Gout <i>v.</i> Aleploglu	951
Goate <i>v.</i> Fryer	550, 561	Gouverneur <i>v.</i> Lynch	634, 1233 <i>a</i>
Goddard <i>v.</i> Carlisle	307, 310	Gower <i>v.</i> Mainwaring	1169
<i>v.</i> Hodges	459 <i>c</i>	Gowland <i>v.</i> De Faria	337, 345
<i>v.</i> Ingepenne	44	Grace <i>v.</i> Webb	291 <i>c</i>
<i>v.</i> Keate	687	Graffety <i>v.</i> Humpage	1065 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Sawyer	1035 <i>g</i>	Grafton Bank <i>v.</i> Foster	1018 <i>c</i>
<i>v.</i> Snow	273	Graham, <i>ex parte</i>	498 <i>a</i>
Godfray <i>v.</i> Godfray	337 <i>c</i>	<i>v.</i> Graham	626, 987, 1202
Godfrey <i>v.</i> Saunders	422	<i>v.</i> Little	239 <i>a</i>
Godsal <i>v.</i> Webb	793 <i>c</i>	<i>v.</i> Londonderry	1375 to 1377
Goilmere <i>v.</i> Battison	785	<i>v.</i> Newman	1016
Going <i>v.</i> Emery	1154 <i>d</i>	<i>v.</i> Oliver	779
Goldney <i>v.</i> Crabb	1067 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> Sam	729
Goldsmid <i>v.</i> Goldsmid	257, 1106	<i>v.</i> The Birkenhead, Lancashire, &c. Railway Company	959
<i>v.</i> Tunbridge Wells Co.	929 <i>d</i>	Grannard <i>v.</i> Dunkin	949
Goldsmith <i>v.</i> Bruning	263, 288	Grant <i>v.</i> Austen	1041, 1042
Gooch <i>v.</i> Gooch	576	<i>v.</i> Bisset	420
Gooch's case	352	<i>v.</i> Duane	1023
Goodall <i>v.</i> Harris	1340, 1352, 1353	<i>v.</i> Grant	1316 <i>a</i> , 1474, 1475
Goodburn <i>v.</i> Stevens	674	<i>v.</i> Hook	1132
Goode <i>v.</i> Goode	180 <i>a</i>	<i>in re</i>	1377
Goodfellow <i>v.</i> Burchett	1122	<i>v.</i> Jackson	74 <i>a</i>
Goodier <i>v.</i> Ashton	1026	<i>v.</i> Lathrop	886
Goodlad <i>v.</i> Burnett	1074 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> (Lessee of) <i>v.</i> Caines	1206
Goodman <i>v.</i> Grierson	1019		

Grant v. Lyman	1065 b	Green v. Pigot	603
v. Mills	1226, 1228	v. Price	292
v. Munt	778, 796	v. Pulsford	1449 a
v. Quick	900	v. Putnam	655, 656 b
Granville, Lady, v. Duchess of		v. Ramage	1233 a
Beaufort	1208	v. Rutherford	1161
Granville & C. Railway v. Cole-		v. Sargent	322
man	1558	v. Slayter	400, 421
Grapengether v. Fejervary	164 f	v. Smith	789
Gratton v. Appleton	606	v. Spicer	974 a
Grave v. Salisbury	1113, 1114, 1117	v. Stephens	983
Graves v. Boston Mar. Ins. Co.	152	v. Weaver	1494
v. Dolphin	974 a	v. Winter	315, 322, 1211, 1238
v. Graves	1246, 1247	Greenaway v. Adams	714, 732, 751, 769, 795, 796, 799
v. Griffith	1474	Greenhill v. Church	1454
v. Mattison	1003	v. Greenhill	790
v. White	193	Greenleaf v. Pigot	730
Gray v. Chiswell	675, 676	v. Queen	1494
v. Chiswick	162	Greenside v. Benson	537
v. Cockerill	703	Greenway, <i>ex parte</i> 64 i, 80 to 82, 105	
v. Mannock	989	Greenwood v. Eldredge	114
v. Mathias	296, 697 to 700 a	v. Firth	547, 1026
v. Minnethorp	572	v. Greenwood	337 c
v. Russell	940	v. Taylor	559, 564 b, 663
v. The Liverpool and Bury		Gregor v. Kemp	278
Railway Co.	959	Gregory v. Moward	1496
Gray, Lord, v. Lady Gray	1203	v. Lockyer	1398
Graydon v. Hicks	288, 291, 1208, 1307	v. Marks	74 d
Great Falls Co. v. Worster	900	v. Mighell	763
Great Northern Railway Co.		v. Wilson	1313, 1315, 1321
v. Eastern Counties Rail-		Grenfell v. Dean of Windsor	1040 d 1040 f
way Co.	959, 1559	Grenfill v. Gridleston	1520, 1521 a
Great Northern Railway v.		Gresley v. Adderly	838
Manchester, Sh. & L. Rail-		v. Mousley	312 a
way	1566	Gretton v. Haward	1080, 1080 a, 1083, 1085
Great Western Railroad Co.		Greville v. Browne	566 a
v. Cripps	138	Grey v. Pearson	1074 c
Great Western Railroad Co.		v. Northumberland, Duke of,	929
v. Rushout	959 d, 1559	Grider v. Payne	499 d
Greated v. Greated	1227	Grierson v. Eyre	517, 619
Greatly v. Noble	1398, 1399, 1400	Griffin v. De Veulle	235
Greatorex v. Cary	1088	v. Griffin	1211
Greaves, <i>ex parte</i>	1277 e	Griffith v. Flood's case	1172
v. Powell	556	v. Griffith	399, 406, 408
v. Wilson	769 a	v. Harrison	1062 a
Greedy v. Lavender	1419	v. Hood	1368
Green v. Belcher	1064	v. Robins	236, 323
v. Bailey	88	v. Rogers	1208
v. Biddle	799 a, 799 b, 1237	v. Spratly	239, 244, 245, 332
v. Bridges	1321	Griffiths v. Evan	1061 a
v. Butler	1018 a	v. Porter	322
v. Darling	1432, 1434 to 1436	Grigby v. Cox	1390, 1399
v. Demoss	1227	Grigg v. Cocks	1258
<i>ex parte</i>	1354, 1355	v. Staples	273
v. Farmer	506, 1433	Grimes v. Blofield	1080
v. Folghamb	952	v. French	862
v. Green	1080, 1083, 1085		
v. Lowes	907, 954		
v. Morris and Essex R. R.	138 e		

Grimestone v. Bruce	1315, 1324	Hales v. Van Berchem	760
<i>ex parte</i> 1336, 1357, 1362,	1364	v. Darrell	1122
Grindley v. Davis	229 a	Halford v. Hatch	686
Grisley v. Lothar	260	Halkett, <i>ex parte</i>	1241
Grochenback v. Ross	374	Hall, <i>ex parte</i>	228
Grogan v. Cooke	267, 368	v. Clagett	157
Groom v. Booth	1233 a	v. Clark	709
Gross v. Leber	138 k	v. Cushman	499 e
Grosvenor v. Allen	64 c	v. Hall	499 e, 669, 671, 1340
v. Austin	675	v. Hardy	731, 1458
v. Dunston	1087 b	v. Hill	1088 a, 1102, 1122
<i>ex parte</i>	1477	v. Hoddesdon	1512
v. Sherratt	337 b	v. Huntoon	296
Grove v. Bastard	1449 a	v. Hutchens	498 d
v. Hodges	440 c	v. Luckey	1065 a
v. Young	1447	v. Luckup	1065 b
Grover v. Grover	607 a, 607 b, 607 c	& Kean v. Porter	260
Groves v. Clarke	1417	v. Reed	125
v. Perkins	132, 1417	v. Smith	400, 776
Gudon v. Gudon	121	v. Warren	229 a, 751, 1077
Guerrant v. Fowler	744	v. Wood	459 a, 459 d
Guest v. Homfray	777	Hallet v. Bousfield	492
Guidott v. Guidott	790	v. Oakes	228
Guion v. Knapp	1233 a	v. Thompson	974 a
Gullan v. Grove	174 a	v. Wylie	102
Gully v. Cregoe	1068 b	Hallock v. Smith	1226
Gumbleton, <i>ex parte</i>	1476	Halloway v. Headington	767, 793 b
Gunter v. Halsey	755, 762, 764, 765	Hally v. Adams	607 c
Guy v. Pearkes	367, 1422	Halsey v. Grant	716, 717 a, 747, 777, 778, 780, 796
v. Sharp	1114	v. Reid	1248 e
Gwillim v. Stone	796, 797, 799	v. Whitney	1036, 1036 a
Gwinnett v. Bannister	1450	Halstead Company <i>in re</i>	1269 a
Gwynne v. Edwards	499, 559, 633	Haly v. Goodson	957
v. Heaton	246, 331, 336, 337, 344 to 346, 348	Hambley v. Trott	467
		Hamblin v. Dinneford	723
		v. Lister	1114
		Hambrook v. Smith	74 c
		Hambrooke v. Simmons	607 d
		Hames v. Hames	1065 b
		Hamet v. Dundas	246
		Hamilton v. Buckmaster	793 o
		v. Cummings	690, 700
		v. Denny	1236
		v. Hamilton	292
		v. Houghton	1037
		v. Marks	806
		v. Royal	400
		v. Russell	352
		v. The New York and Hudson River Rail- road Co.	924 a, 927
		v. Watson	215
		v. Whitridge	925 a
		v. Wright	321, 322
		Hamlin v. Hamlin	74 d
		Hammath v. Emerson	193
		Hammersley v. Baron De Biel	268,
			987 a

H.

Habergham v. Vincent	983
Habershon v. Blurton	677
v. Troby	1496
v. Vardon	1164
Hack v. Leonard	1320 to 1322, 1326 a
Hackett v. Webb	810
Hadow v. Hadow	1289 a
Haffey v. Haffey	1470, 1472
Hager v. Thomas	164 f
Haggarty v. Palmer	1222
Hagger v. Payne	1074 b
Haigh, <i>ex parte</i>	1020
v. Jaggard	918 a
Hal v. Dyson	293 b
Hale v. Darter	614
v. Harrison	496
v. Thomas	916, 1316 a
v. Webb	98, 422, 474
Hales v. Margerum	1394

Hammersley v. Lambert	676	Harrington v. Bigelow	298
Hammond v. Fuller	927	v. Churchward	451
v. Messenger	1057 a	v. Duchastel	295
v. Neame	1289 a	v. Harte	176
Hampden v. Hampden	184, 254	v. Long	1039, 1048, 1049, 1050, 1054
Hampshire v. Pierce	179, 180	Harris v. Clark	606 a, 607 c
Hanbury v. Hussey	646	v. Cotterell	1447, 1508, 1516
v. Kirkland	1269	v. Ferguson	495
v. Litchfield	400, 777	v. Harris	1269 a
v. Walker	1399	v. Ingledew	484
Hancom v. Allen	1269, 1273	v. Mitchell	1452
Hanington v. Du Chattel	695, 698	v. Morris	1422
v. Long	1039, 1048, 1050, 1054	v. Mott	1319 a
Hankey v. Smith	1435	v. Pepperell	793 p
v. Vernon	894, 895, 897	v. Tremeneere	310 to 313
Hankin v. Middleditch	1514	v. Watkins	1087 b
Hannah v. Hodson	337 b	Harrison v. Armitage	671
Hannam v. Sims	1074 a	v. Austin	168
Hanney v. Eve	61	v. Buckle	1403, 1414
Hanning v. Ferrers	385, 389	v. Coppard	203 b
Hansard v. Robinson	82, 85, 86	<i>ex parte</i>	1214, 1242
Hanson v. Edgerly	212 a	v. Field	164
<i>ex parte</i>	1437	v. Forth	410
v. Gardner	854, 855, 928	v. Gardner	292
v. Hancock	298	v. Guest	245 a
v. Keating	64 c, 1408, 1409 a, 1410, 1414	v. Gurney	899
v. Meyer	1216	v. Harrison	1088, 1263
Harbert's case	476, 477, 484	v. Hart	1031
Harbin v. Darby	1268 a	v. Lord North	101
Harbridge v. Wogan	160	v. Mirge	164
Harcourt v. White	518 a	v. Mork	322
Hard v. Hard	1269 a	v. Nettleship	894
Hardcastle v. Smithson	519	v. Pugh	1216
Harden v. Parsons	1274	v. Southcote	703, 1481, 1493
Harding v. Glynn	98, 105 a, 1061, 1068	v. Tenant	673 b
v. Handy	694, 696	v. Troup	1223
Hardwick v. Forbes's Adm'r	184	v. Trustees of Phillips Academy	369
v. Mynd	95, 503	Harrow School v. Alderton	917
, Earl of, v. Vernon	462, 467	Hart, Leslie, & Warren v. F. & M. Bank	408, 1503 b
Hardy v. Martin	1314	Hart v. Mayor of Albany	924 a, 927
Hare v. Beecher	1367 a	v. Ten Eyck	623, 1031, 1272, 1282, 1529
v. Shearwood	759	Hartford & New Haven Railroad	
Harford v. Lloyd	1261 a	Co. v. Crosswell	959, 1557
Hargreaves v. Mitchell	1521 a	Hartley v. Cummings	292
v. Rothwell	408	v. Hurlie	1383
Harland v. Trigg	1068 a, 1070, 1072	v. O'Flaherty	1233 a
Harman v. Cannon	112	v. Rice	274, 294
Harmer v. Plane	931, 934	v. Russell	1049, 1050, 1552
Harner v. Fisher	203 f	v. Tapley	1040, 1056
Harnett v. Yielding	714, 716, 717, 719 a, 750 a, 764, 766, 767, 769	v. Tatham	1018 d
Harpee v. Munday	1247 a	Hartly v. Hitchcock	1216
Harper v. Ravenhill	1417	Hartop v. Whitmore	1113
Hartop v. Harptop	1111	Hartopp v. Hartopp	193 a, 309 a
Harrell v. Ellsworth	927	Hartwell v. Chittees	551
		v. Hartwell	295

Hartwell v. Smith	449 <i>e</i>	Hayes v. Hayes	833 <i>a</i> , 848
Harvard College v. Society for Promoting Education	1174, 1176, 1178 <i>a</i>	v. Morse	1521 <i>b</i>
Harvey v. Aston	280, 285, 287, 288, 290	v. Ward	324, 327, 493, 494, 499, 501, 502, 633, 636, 638, 639, 640, 641, 730, 849
v. Blakeman	1283	Haynes v. Littlefear	596
v. Cook	130 to 132	v. Mico	1106
v. Cricket	664	Hayter v. Trigo	1182
<i>ex parte</i>	371	Hayton v. Rod	998
v. Harvey	1355, 1372, 1380	Hayward v. Angello	1315, 1320
v. Montague	407	v. Dimsdale	700
v. Morris	1497	v. Judson	656 <i>b</i> , 656 <i>c</i>
v. Mount	236, 239, 244	Haywood v. Cope	212 <i>a</i>
v. Peck	231	v. Hudson	658
v. Richards	589	Hazzard v. Irwin	193
v. Tebbutt	74 <i>a</i>	Heacock v. Fly	115, 118
v. Wood	1437	Head v. Boston Mar. Ins. Co.	158
Harwood v. Fisher	1412	v. Egerton	707
v. Oglander	69, 571, 577	v. Head	1422, 1424, 1425
v. Tooke	265, 343, 1040 <i>b</i>	v. Randall	1065 <i>b</i>
v. West	1073	Headen v. Rosher	336, 1396
Hasbrouck v. Vandervoort	1032	Healy v. McMurray	1016 <i>a</i>
Haselinton v. Gill	1385	v. Rowan	1370
Haskell v. Allen	614	Heames v. Bance	418
v. Haskell	1490	Heap v. Tonge	132
Haslett v. Pattle	93	Heaphy v. Hill	767
Haslewood v. Pope	64 <i>f</i> , 557, 565, 571	Heard v. Stanford	616
Hassell v. Hassell	1247	Hearle v. Greenbank	109
v. Smithers	1045, 1258, 1946	Hearn v. Baker	604 <i>a</i>
Hastings v. Whitley	292	Hearne v. Benbow	917
Hatch v. Cobb	798	Heath v. Bucknall	927 <i>b</i>
v. Hatch	298, 310, 312, 313, 319, 321	v. Fisher	665 <i>a</i>
v. Vt. Cent. R. R. Co.	929 <i>a</i>	v. Hall	1047
Hatton v. Hatton	596	v. Hay	326
Hatzfele v. Gulden	293 <i>b</i>	v. Perry	603
Haughton v. Haughton	291 <i>d</i>	Heatley v. Thomas	1394, 1400, 1401
Hauser v. Shore	1132 <i>a</i>	Hebb v. Hebb	606
Haven v. Foster	111	Hedges v. Everard	796, 799
Haverstick v. Sipe	927 <i>a</i>	v. Harper	1067 <i>b</i>
Hawes v. Wyatt	239, 309	v. Hedges	606
Hawkes v. Saunders	591	Heister's Lessee v. Fortner	404
Hawkins v. Day	90, 539, 597	Heli, <i>in re</i>	1336
v. Everett	604 <i>a</i>	Hemings v. Pugh	462 <i>a</i>
v. Freeman	1435	Hemming v. Clutterbuck	1123 <i>a</i>
v. Holmes	759, 762	Hemmings v. Munckley	290
v. Kelley	482	Henderson v. Dukey	138 <i>k</i>
v. Maltby	724 <i>b</i>	v. McDuffee	496 <i>a</i>
v. Skeggs	291 <i>b</i>	v. Royal British Bank	440 <i>b</i>
Hawkshaw v. Parkins	678, 699, 954	v. Vaulx	604
Hawley v. Clowes	515, 916	Hendrick v. Hopkins	230
v. Cramer	321, 457	v. Wood	683 <i>a</i>
v. Mancius	322	Hendrickson v. Hinckley	894, 1436, 1582
Haworden v. Dunlop	683 <i>a</i>	Heneage v. Hunloke	160
Hay v. Palmer	479, 480	Henkle v. Royal Assurance Co.	152, 153, 157 to 159, 770 <i>a</i>
Hayard v. Angell	1315	Henley v. Cooke	131
Hayden v. Hayden	677	Hennell v. Kelland	894
Hayes v. Benent	680	v. Whitaker	1247, 1247 <i>a</i>

Hennessey <i>v.</i> Brag	1261 <i>c</i>	Hill <i>v.</i> Fulbrook	655
<i>v.</i> Western Bank	1036	<i>v.</i> Gray	198, 212 <i>a</i>
Henry <i>v.</i> Tupper	1326 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Hill	607 <i>d</i>
Hentz <i>v.</i> Long Island Railroad	927	<i>v.</i> Kelly	499 <i>b</i>
Hepburn <i>v.</i> Auld	777, 778, 796	<i>v.</i> Paul	1040 <i>d</i> , 1040 <i>f</i>
<i>v.</i> Dundas	71, 776	<i>v.</i> Pine River Bank	1201 <i>c</i>
<i>v.</i> Dunlop	116, 161, 197, 770,	<i>v.</i> Simpson	422, 424, 579, 580,
	777		1128, 1257
Hepwill <i>v.</i> Knight	776	<i>v.</i> South Straffordshire Railway	
Herbert <i>v.</i> Cook	1576	Co.	1537
<i>v.</i> Herbert	1382, 1387	<i>v.</i> Spencer	298
<i>v.</i> Wren	626, 632	<i>v.</i> Thompson	934
Herbert, <i>in re</i>	1065 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Turner	598
Herbert's case	1358	<i>v.</i> United States	
Hercy <i>v.</i> Birch	666	<i>v.</i> Walker	579 <i>a</i>
Hereford <i>v.</i> Griffin	939	Hillersden <i>v.</i> Grove	1074 <i>b</i>
Heriot's Hospital, Feoffees of, <i>v.</i>		Hilles <i>v.</i> Parrish	1562
Gibson	927	Hills <i>v.</i> Croll	958, 958 <i>a</i>
Herne <i>v.</i> Meyrick	565	<i>v.</i> Miller	927
Heron <i>v.</i> Heron	309, 1201	Hilton <i>v.</i> Barrow	698
<i>v.</i> Newton	1208	<i>v.</i> Biron	1476
Herrick <i>v.</i> Belknap	1457 <i>a</i> , 1457 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> Eckerstey	292
<i>v.</i> Blair	1454	<i>v.</i> Lord Scarborough	858
Hertford <i>v.</i> Boore	776	Himes <i>v.</i> Keller	493, 499, 499 <i>a</i>
Hervey <i>v.</i> Young	199	Hinchcliffe <i>v.</i> Hinchcliffe	1109, 1111
Hetrick's Appeal	229 <i>b</i>	Hincksman <i>v.</i> Smith	336, 338
Hewes <i>v.</i> Dehon	1248 <i>a</i>	Hind's Lessee <i>v.</i> Longworth	359, 362
Hewitt <i>v.</i> Crane	309	Hindley <i>v.</i> Westmeath	1422, 1428
<i>v.</i> Loosemore	391, 393, 399,	Hindson <i>v.</i> Weatherell	313
	400 <i>a</i> , 1020, 1226	Hine <i>v.</i> Dood	400 <i>a</i> , 402, 403
<i>v.</i> Wright	790, 793	<i>v.</i> Handy	95
Heydock <i>v.</i> Stanhope	1036	Hinton <i>v.</i> Hinton	239
Heyn's case	1476	<i>v.</i> Parker	537
Heysham <i>v.</i> Heysham	1355	Hipwell <i>v.</i> Knight	776
Heywood, <i>ex parte</i>	506, 1045, 1216	Hirst <i>v.</i> Tolson	472, 474
<i>v.</i> Waring	1216	Hitch <i>v.</i> Davis	607 <i>a</i>
Hibbard <i>v.</i> Lambe	1287	<i>v.</i> Wells	1447
Hibbert <i>v.</i> Cooke	1237	Hitchcock <i>v.</i> Giddings	140, 142, 143
<i>v.</i> Hibbert	666	Hitchins <i>v.</i> Hitchins	629, 1088
<i>v.</i> Rolleston	177	Hixam <i>v.</i> Witham	554 to 556
Hicks <i>v.</i> Campbell	372 <i>b</i>	Hoare <i>v.</i> Contencin	162
Hickson <i>v.</i> Witham	353, 362	Hobart <i>v.</i> Countess of Suffolk	1200
Hide <i>v.</i> Pettit	744, 959	Hobbs <i>v.</i> Norton	64, 387
Higgin <i>v.</i> Lyddal	416	Hobday <i>v.</i> Peters	312 <i>a</i> , 1277 <i>d</i>
Higgins <i>v.</i> Frankis	634 <i>a</i>	Hobson <i>v.</i> Blackburn	1180
<i>v.</i> Mills	1527	<i>v.</i> Trevor	1040 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Somels	749 <i>a</i>	Hockley <i>v.</i> Mawby	1067 <i>b</i>
Higgins's case	164	Hodgens <i>v.</i> Hodgens	1417, 1418,
Higberger <i>v.</i> Stiffler	229 <i>b</i>		1419 <i>a</i>
Hileman <i>v.</i> Wright	157	Hodges <i>v.</i> Griggs	711 <i>a</i>
Hill <i>v.</i> Barclay	725, 727, 1313, 1315,	<i>v.</i> Hodges	1422
	1316, 1321 to 1323,	<i>v.</i> Smith	811
	1326, 1326 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Tennessee	1018
<i>v.</i> Beebe	1035 <i>c</i>	<i>v.</i> Waddington	92
<i>v.</i> Bishop of London	1196 <i>a</i> , 1200,	Hodgkinson <i>v.</i> Wyatt	159
	1245	Hodgman <i>v.</i> Birbby	1520 <i>d</i>
<i>v.</i> Buckley	779	Hodgson <i>v.</i> Anderson	1039
<i>v.</i> Burns	1164	<i>v.</i> Butts	354, 1241
<i>v.</i> Epley	1541	<i>v.</i> Murray	906

Hodgson v. Shaw	494, 499 to 499 <i>d</i>	Hooper v. Brodick	959 <i>a</i>
Hoff's Appeal	1248 <i>e</i>	v. Dundas	285, 289, 291 <i>b</i>
Hogan v. Delaware Insurance Co.	158, 161	v. Eyles	1201
Hogg v. Kirby	931 to 933, 951	<i>ex parte</i>	760, 762, 1020
Hoggart v. Cutts	814	Hope v. Carnegie	589 <i>b</i>
v. Scott	777	v. Hayley	1040 <i>a</i>
Holbird v. Anderson	370, 1036	v. Hope	959 <i>g</i> , 1409 <i>a</i>
Holbridge v. Gillespie	1016, 1019, 1211	v. Liddell	1261 <i>b</i>
Holbrook v. Sharpey	302, 694, 696	Hopkins v. Adams	86 <i>a</i>
Holcomb v. Stimpson	118	<i>ex parte</i>	1340
Holden v. Pike	1233 <i>a</i>	v. Hopkins	969, 983, 1049
Holder v. Chambury	87, 684, 684 <i>b</i> , 684 <i>c</i>	v. Mazyck	138 <i>f</i>
Holdich v. Holdich	1088	Hopkisk v. Randolph	425
Holditch v. Mist	640	Hopper v. Congers	533
Holland v. Hughes	1273	Hopwood v. Hopwood	1109
Holland v. Prior	423, 581	Horde v. The Earl of Suffolk	1164
Holley v. Adams	432 <i>b</i>	Horn v. Gilpin	466
Holliday v. Atkinson	607 <i>c</i>	v. Horn	367, 368, 604, 1132
Holliver v. Eyre	883 <i>a</i>	v. Thompson	1323
Hollinrake v. Edwards	717, 759	Hornblower v. Shirley	777
v. Lister	1315, 1320	Hornby v. Gordon	824 <i>a</i>
v. Whiting	768	Horncastle v. Charlesworth	646
Hollis v. Claridge	1216	Hornesby v. Finch	1208
v. Edwards	717, 759	v. Lee	1413
Holloway v. Clarkson	1065 <i>b</i>	Horrell v. Waldron	529, 597, 600
v. Headington	372, 433, 706 <i>a</i> , 767, 793 <i>b</i> , 973, 987, 988, 1040 <i>c</i>	Horridge v. Ferguson	1065 <i>b</i>
v. Holloway	951 <i>a</i>	Horsburg v. Baker	1319, 1494
v. Millard	176, 352, 353, 355, 356, 359, 361, 362, 363, 372	Horsford v. Marvin	653
Holman v. Johnson	61	Horwood v. West	1068
Holmes v. Coghill	169, 170	Hosack v. Rogers	112
v. Custance	180, 181	Hosford v. Merwin	658
v. Dring	1274	Hoskins v. Hoskins	1208
v. Field	291 <i>b</i>	Hosmer v. True	1328
v. Higgins	664	Hotchkin v. Dickron	129
v. Holmes	1105, 1426	Hotchkiss v. Fortson	231
Holroyd v. Marshall	1040 <i>a</i>	Hotham v. Stone	499 <i>b</i> , 499 <i>d</i>
Holsman v. Boiling Spring Co.	951 <i>h</i>	Hough v. Barton	86
v. The Boiling Sp. Bl. Co.	929 <i>d</i> , 929 <i>e</i>	v. Beard	1452
Holt v. Holt	90, 725	v. Richardson	191, 193, 1521 <i>a</i>
v. Rogers	771	Houghton, <i>ex parte</i>	1206
Holtscorn v. Rivers	529, 1528	v. Hapgood	488 <i>a</i>
Holtzapfell v. Baker	102	v. Houghton	309 <i>a</i> , 674
Holworthy v. Mortlock	897	Houghwont v. Bowisaubin	793 <i>u</i>
Home v. Pillans	604 <i>a</i>	Hovenden v. Lord Annesley	529, 975, 1520, 1521
v. Pringle	1268, 1283 <i>a</i>	Hovey v. Blakeman	1281
Hone v. Brether	142	How v. Tenants of Broomsgrove	855
Honeyman v. Marryatt	736 <i>b</i>	v. Vignes	1026, 1029
Honner v. Morton	1410 to 1413	v. Weldon	246, 251, 332
Hood v. Aston	906, 955, 995	Howard v. American Society	1154 <i>d</i> , 1494 <i>f</i>
v. Fahnstock	400	v. Brown	591
Hooley v. Hatton	1123 <i>a</i>	v. Castle	293
		v. Digby, Earl of	1375 <i>a</i> , 1396, 1425
		v. Edgell	246, 769
		v. Henriquez	951
		v. Howard	542
		v. Lee	926

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Howard v. Menifée | 1376 | Humphries v. Leggett | 1582 |
| v. Moffat | 1408 | Hunsden v. Cheyney | 271, 387 |
| v. Puffer | 138 <i>f</i> | Hunt v. Coachman | 897 |
| v. Shrewsbury, Earl of | 257 <i>c</i> | v. Elmes | 408 |
| Howarth v. Deem | 400 | v. Frazier | 138 <i>k</i> |
| v. Dewell | 1068 <i>b</i> | v. Matthews | 254 |
| Howden v. Rogers | 1473, 1475 | v. Moore | 238 |
| Lord, v. Simpson | 293 <i>a</i> | v. Peake | 927 <i>a</i> |
| Howe v. Earl of Dartmouth | 604, 1269 | v. Rousmaniere's Adm'rs | 111, |
| c. Harrington | 372 <i>b</i> | 113 to 116, 121, 122, 125, | |
| c. Hunt | 749 <i>c</i> | 137, 153, 154, 161 to 163 | |
| v. Russell | 1018 | v. Scott | 604 |
| v. Sheppard | 1434, 1436 | Hunter v. Atkins | 310, 311 |
| Howell v. Baker | 313 | v. Bales | 747 |
| v. George | 733 to 735, 742 | v. Belcher | 462 <i>a</i> |
| v. Price | 571, 1016, 1065 | v. Boyen | 138 <i>k</i> |
| v. Ransom | 311 | v. Daniel | 1048, 1048 <i>a</i> , 1049, |
| Howkins v. Jackson | 160 | 1050 | |
| Howland v. Norris | 796 | Huntington v. Gilmore | 607 <i>a</i> |
| Howse v. Chapman | 1164 | Hurlbert v. Pacific Insurance Com- | |
| Hoxie v. Carr | 675, 1207, 1243 | pany | 1434 |
| Hoy v. Smythies | 769 <i>a</i> | Hurlbut v. Phelps | 131 |
| Hoyt v. Thompson | 1049 | Hurlbut v. Mayo | 1575 <i>a</i> |
| Hubbard v. Eastman | 1575 | Hurst v. Beach | 507 <i>a</i> , 593, 596, 602, |
| Hubbell v. Warren | 956 | 1123 <i>a</i> | |
| Huddleston v. Huddleston | 624 | v. Sheldon | 824 <i>a</i> |
| Hudnor v. Wilder | 425 | Hussey v. Christie | 1241 |
| Hudson v. Bennett | 951 <i>f</i> | Hustin's Adm'rs v. Cantril | 364 |
| c. Hudson | 1209 | Hutchinson v. Massareene | 831 |
| c. Kline | 897 | v. Tindel | 231 |
| Huffman v. Humer | 793 <i>u</i> | Hutton v. Dewey | 1427 |
| Huger v. Huger | 322 <i>a</i> | v. Simpson | 511, 628 |
| Huggins v. Alexander | 1091 | Hyde v. Hyde | 566 |
| Hughes v. Davies | 519 | v. Farret | 604, 844 |
| v. Edwards | 1520 | v. Tanner | 161, 162 |
| v. Gamer | 408 | v. Tracey | 498 |
| v. Kearney | 1217, 1220, 1224 | v. White | 343 |
| to 1266 | | v. Whitfield | 1470, 1475 |
| v. Science | 1332, 1333, 1352, | Hylton v. Biron | 1476 |
| 1353, 1358 | | v. Hylton | 263, 313, 318, 320 |
| v. Stubbes | 793 <i>a</i> | v. Morgan | 1493 |
| v. Trustees of Mordon | | Hyslop v. Clarke | 1036, 1036 <i>a</i> |
| College | 870 | | |
| v. Wynne | 1521 <i>a</i> | | |
| Hughes v. Boyd | 291 <i>b</i> | | |
| Huguenin v. Baseley | 236, 239, 246, | | |
| 256, 308, 315, 331, 834, 861, 959 | | | |
| Hulme v. Chitty | 64 <i>f</i> | | |
| c. Coles | 883 <i>a</i> | | |
| v. Hulme | 1280 | | |
| v. Tenant | 1390, 1392, 1397, | | |
| 1399 to 1401 | | | |
| Humble v. Bill | 422, 1128 | | |
| c. Humble | 1521 <i>b</i> | | |
| Hume v. Pocock | 793 <i>r</i> | | |
| c. Richardson | 1270 <i>a</i> | | |
| Humphrey v. Humphreys | 604 | | |
| Humphreys v. Harrison | 914 | | |
| Humphries v. Brogden | 927 <i>a</i> | | |
| | | I. | |
| | | Ibbotson v. Rhodes | 393 |
| | | Iglehart v. Lee | 894 |
| | | Ilchester, Lord, v. Carnarvon | 574 |
| | | Imperial Gas-light Co. v. London, | |
| | | &c. Co. | 1521 <i>a</i> |
| | | Inchbald v. Barrington | 925 <i>a</i> , 927 <i>c</i> |
| | | Inchinquin v. French | 572, 972 |
| | | Incedon v. Northcote | 568, 1376 |
| | | Indianapolis v. The Grand Mas- | |
| | | ter, &c. | 1494 <i>f</i> |
| | | Ingham v. Bickerdike | 1389 |
| | | Ingle v. Partridge | 1273 <i>f</i> |
| | | v. Richards | 1277 <i>c</i> |

Inglis v. Trustees of Sailors' Snug Harbor	1169, 1170
Ingraham v. Wheeler	1036, 1036 a
Ingram, <i>in re</i>	1273 b
v. Morecraft	925 e
v. Pelham	410
Inhab. of Princeton v. Adams	1191 a
Innes v. Jackson	734, 1373
v. Mitchell	1065 a
Inwood v. Twyne	1357
Irby, <i>in re</i>	1365 b
Iresen v. Denn	1023
Irick v. Fulton	143
Irnham v. Child	113, 120, 153, 154, 156, 251, 768
Iroin v. Dixon	926
Irons v. Smallpiece	606
Irvine v. Kirkpatrick	194, 197, 204, 207
Irving v. Young	528
Irwing v. Farrer	1394
Isham v. Gilbert	71, 74 e
Isler v. Baker	673
Israel v. Douglass	1039, 1041
Ithell v. Beane	422, 987
Ive v. Ash	295
Ives v. Metcalfe	1451, 1454, 1498
Ivie v. Ivie	704
Ivy v. Gilbert	1064
v. Kekewick	1490

J.

Jack v. Naber	138 k
Jackman v. Mitchell	379, 695, 700
Jackson v. Burgott	184
Jackson v. Burtis	1062
v. Butler	703, 709
v. Caldwell	375
v. Cator	388
v. Cocke	724
v. De Witt	1035 b
v. Duchaise	338
v. Ferris,	1060, 1062
v. Given	410
v. Hammond	1194
v. Hankey	1354 b
v. Henry	410
v. Hobhouse	1080 a, 1080 b
v. Jackson	1206, 1207, 1249, 1273
v. Leap	544, 549
v. Lever	104
v. Lomas	379
v. McChesney	1503 a
v. Moore	1201
v. Nealy	400
v. Ogg	1521 b
v. Petrie	744, 1294, 1470

Jackson v. Phillips	1494 g
v. Robinson	1437
& Sadler, <i>ex parte</i>	379
v. Sharp	397
v. Summerville	203 a
v. Thorpe	162, 163
v. Town	359, 364, 427
v. West	397
Jackson's Assignees v. Cutright	760
Jacobs v. Amyatt	1384
v. Peterborough and Shirley Railroad Co.	759, 763
v. Richards	229 a
Jacobsen v. Williams	1411
Jalabert v. Chandos	161
James v. Allen	1164
v. Bydder	793 c
v. Dean	1211
v. Downes	892
<i>ex parte</i>	322
v. Hawkins	704
v. Hubbard	1233 a
v. Kynnier	1435, 1436
v. Marcy	1035 a, 1035 b
v. Morgan	188, 331, 1303
v. Scott	845
Jamison v. May	897
Janon v. Rany	1528
v. Solarte	1494
January v. Rutherford	1287
Jaques v. Methodist Episcopal Church	1390
Jarman v. Woolcotton	1385
Jarrold v. Heywood	941 a
v. Houlston	941 a
Jarvis v. Brooks	675
v. Chandler	887, 894
v. Duke	191, 196, 204
v. Palmer	161
v. Rogers	1034
Jasan v. Toulmin	529
Jee v. Thurlow	1428
Jefferson v. Bishop of Durham	864, 909
Jefferys v. Jefferys	372, 433, 706 a, 793 a, 793 b, 987, 1040 c
Jeffery v. Stevens	770 b
Jeffrey v. Bowles	941
Jeffs v. Wood	1119, 1431, 1435, 1436
Jenkins v. Hill	1127
v. Houghes	1074 b
v. Kemis	107
v. Lord Clinton	1065 c
v. Parkinson	1470
v. Pye	309
Jenner v. Harper	1171
v. Jenner	337 b
v. Morgan	481
Jeness v. Howard	231
Jennings v. Broughton	263 b, 1537

Jennings <i>v.</i> Moore	408	Jones <i>v.</i> Davids	409, 499 <i>b</i> , 499 <i>d</i>
Jerrard <i>v.</i> Saunders	410, 631, 1503	<i>v.</i> Deyer	607 <i>a</i>
Jervis <i>v.</i> White	698, 700, 702	<i>v.</i> Dumnport Bank	499
Jervois <i>v.</i> Northumberland, Duke		<i>v.</i> Earl of Suffolk	1307
of,	979, 983, 984	<i>v.</i> Geddes	900
Jesse <i>v.</i> Roy	471	<i>v.</i> Gowan	298
Jesus College <i>v.</i> Bloom	64 <i>k</i> , 67, 69,	<i>v.</i> Harris	1397, 1398, 1401
	467, 513, 516, 518	<i>in re</i>	1338
Jew <i>v.</i> Thirkenell	479	<i>v.</i> Jones 72, 184, 440, 1445, 1447	
<i>v.</i> Wood	811	<i>v.</i> Lewis	1269
Jewson <i>v.</i> Grant	503	<i>v.</i> Marsh	372, 375
<i>v.</i> Moulton	372, 598, 1038,	<i>v.</i> Martin	252, 273, 382
	1229, 1403, 1407,	<i>v.</i> Morgan 486, 1100, 1109, 1111	
	1408, 1410, 1411	<i>v.</i> Noy	673 <i>a</i>
Joanna Gordien, <i>In the matter of</i> ,	1365	<i>v.</i> Peppercorne	1253 <i>a</i>
Jodrell <i>v.</i> Jodrell	132, 1375 <i>a</i> , 1427	<i>v.</i> Randall	1065 <i>a</i>
Johnes <i>v.</i> Lockhart	1382, 1383	<i>v.</i> Ricketts	337 <i>b</i>
Johnes's case	459 <i>c</i>	<i>v.</i> Robbins	776
Johnson <i>v.</i> Aston	841	<i>v.</i> Roberts	312
<i>v.</i> Atkinson	812	<i>v.</i> Roe	1040, 1040 <i>b</i> , 1040 <i>c</i>
<i>v.</i> Brown	421	<i>v.</i> Sampson	1173
<i>v.</i> Clendenin	1473	<i>v.</i> Selby	606, 607
<i>v.</i> Cornett	1018 <i>c</i>	<i>v.</i> Sheriff	161
<i>v.</i> Curtis	523, 526, 527	<i>v.</i> Smith 345 <i>a</i> , 399, 400 <i>a</i> , 418,	
<i>v.</i> Cummins	1401 <i>h</i>		419, 1020, 1023, 1030,
<i>v.</i> De la Creuze	603		1032, 1034
<i>v.</i> Gallagher	1397, 1401	<i>v.</i> Thomas	311, 813 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Hubbell	180 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Tripp	310
<i>v.</i> Huston	1018	<i>v.</i> Waite	1428
<i>v.</i> Johnson	90, 493, 1412,	<i>v.</i> Westcombe	1208
	1415, 1417	<i>v.</i> Whitaker	435
<i>v.</i> Kennett	1132	<i>v.</i> Williams	400 <i>a</i> , 1164
<i>v.</i> Lugg	1226	<i>v.</i> Yates	681
<i>v.</i> Medlicot	230, 231	Jope <i>v.</i> Morshead	646, 653
<i>v.</i> Mills	603, 846	Jopp <i>v.</i> Williams	614
<i>v.</i> Ogilby	294	Jordan <i>v.</i> Lowe	1067 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Stagg	403	<i>v.</i> Money	987 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Sugg	1226	<i>v.</i> Stevens	138 <i>l</i>
<i>v.</i> Twist	1208	<i>v.</i> Woodward	928
<i>v.</i> Vail	1401 <i>c</i>	Jordell <i>v.</i> Jordell	1289 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Wyatt	1520 <i>d</i>	Jortin, <i>ex parte</i>	1178
Johnstone <i>v.</i> Beatte	1351, 1352 <i>a</i> , 1353	Joslin <i>v.</i> Brewitt	1208
<i>in re</i>	1398 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Wyman	1035 <i>c</i>
<i>v.</i> Swann	1164	Joslyn <i>v.</i> Smith	326
Jolland <i>v.</i> Stainbridge	400 <i>a</i> , 402	Joy <i>v.</i> Campbell	1281, 1283, 1284
Jolley <i>v.</i> Jacques	939	<i>v.</i> Gilbert	1064
Jones <i>v.</i> Alepsin	1473	<i>v.</i> Joy	704
<i>v.</i> Bailey	1027 <i>a</i>	Joynes <i>v.</i> Stratham	155, 156, 161, 742,
<i>v.</i> Baird	183		768, 770, 770 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Barkley	379	Julian <i>v.</i> Reynolds	321
<i>v.</i> Bennet	1459	Juliana, The	332
<i>v.</i> Blanton	496 <i>a</i>	Juzan <i>v.</i> Toulmin	199, 204
<i>v.</i> Boston Mill Corp.	1456 <i>a</i> ,		
	1458 <i>a</i>		
<i>v.</i> Boulter	359, 364, 365		
<i>v.</i> Bowles	1502		
<i>v.</i> Bradford	449 <i>e</i>		
<i>v.</i> Caswell	293		
<i>v.</i> Croucher	352, 425		

K.

Kain <i>v.</i> Old	160
Kampshire <i>v.</i> Young	1450
Kane <i>v.</i> Bloodgood	975, 1520

Katz v. Moore	876 a	Kent v. Richards	885
Kaye, <i>in re</i>	1347 d	Kenyon v. Clark	886
Keane v. Roberts	580, 581, 1129	v. Worthington	548, 549
Kearsley v. Cole	326	Keppel v. Bailey	737
Keate v. Allen	266, 267	Ker v. Wauchope	1085
Keates v. Cadogan	198, 212 a	Kerr v. Purdy	793 u
Keble v. Thompson	1284	Kerrich v. Bransby	184, 440, 1449 a
Keech v. Hall	1017	Kershaw v. Thompson	959
Keeler v. Taylor	292	Ketchum v. Stout	141, 779
Keeling v. Brown	1247	Kettleby v. Atwood	790, 987
Keighler v. Savage Manuf. Co.	876 a	Key v. Bradshaw	274, 275
Keily v. Monck	280, 290, 608	v. Flint	1435
Keir v. Leeman	294	v. Simpson	138 f
Keisselbrach v. Livingston	161	Keys v. Williams	1020
Keith v. Goodwin	164 a	Keyser's Estate	1248 e
Keiting v. Sparrow	1322, 1326	Kidney v. Coussmaker	356, 360 to 362, 556, 1092, 1098, 1247
Kekewick v. Marker	915	Kilborne v. Robbins	1018 e
v. Manning	717, 793 c, 1035 a	Kildare, Earl of, v. Eustace	744
Kelley v. Jenness	1201 c	Kill v. Hollister	1457
v. Power	1001	Kilmorey v. Thackeray	722
Kelly v. Solari	138, 138 c, 140	Kimberley v. Jennings	758 a, 769, 798
Kelso v. Tabor	1401 i	Kimpland v. Courtney	1040
Kemble v. Kean	722 a, 758, 758 a, 958, 959 a	Kinaston v. Clarke	1216 c
Kemp v. Finden	492, 495	Kinder v. Jones	929
v. Mackrell	897	Kinderley v. Jervis	987 a
v. Pryor	691, 700	Kine v. Balfe	763
v. Westbrook	1031 to 1033	King v. Baldwin	33, 71, 80, 324, 326, 327, 456, 457, 493, 499, 639, 641, 849, 883
Kempe v. Antill	559	v. Bardeau	777
v. Pryer	11, 64, 64 b, 64 i, 80, 81	v. Burr	1404
Kempshall v. Stone	797, 798	v. Clark	74 a
Kendall v. Almy	767, 769, 771	v. Cotton	273
v. Davis	951 a	v. Dupine	368
v. Granger	1156 a, 1164	v. Dennison	1196 a, 1244 to 1246
<i>ex parte</i>	162, 163, 327 a, 559, 560, 562, 633, 638, 643, 644, 676, 1253	<i>ex parte</i>	1023
Kenge v. Delavall	1400	v. Greenhill	1341 a
Kennard v. George	138 k	v. Hamilton	751, 769 to 771, 776
Kennedy v. Brown	527 a	v. Hamlet	339, 340, 346, 906
v. Carpenter	164	v. King	907, 1476
v. Daly	410	v. McVicker	634, 642
v. Earl of Cassillis	899	v. Rossett	458
v. Green	399, 400 b	v. Smith	915, 1016, 1026
v. May	1347 c	v. Whiting	986
v. Sedgwick	1074 e	v. Wilson	776, 779
v. Stainsby	1208	King's Heirs v. Thompson	793 b
Kennell v. Abbott	182, 183	King, The, v. Bennet	502
Kenny v. Clarkson	140	v. Lords' Commiss. of the Treasury	1040 f
Kenny v. Udall	1361, 1403, 1407, 1412	v. The Free Fishers of Whitstable	508
Kensington v. Dolland	1383, 1384	v. Watson	1036
<i>ex parte</i>	1020	King of the Two Sicilies v. Will- cox	1494
, Lord, v. Mansell	1493 a	Kingham v. Lee	515
Kenson's case	1171	Kingsman v. Kingsman	758
Kent v. Elstob	1450, 1455	Kinnoul v. Mooney	1023
<i>ex parte</i>	1354	Kintner v. Blair	1018
v. Kent	522		
v. Pickering	550, 890		

Kirby <i>v.</i> Carr	673 <i>a</i>	Lady Thynne <i>v.</i> Earl of Glengall	1097,
Kirk <i>v.</i> Clark	1368		1101, 1105, 1109, 1115
<i>v.</i> Eddowes	1102, 1105, 1111,	Laidlow <i>v.</i> Organ	148, 149, 192, 197,
	1112, 1113		207, 211, 212 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Webb	1201	Laight <i>v.</i> Morgan	74 <i>c</i> , 74 <i>e</i>
Kirkbank <i>v.</i> Hudson	1164	Laing <i>v.</i> McKee	208 <i>g</i>
Kirkby <i>v.</i> Duke of Marlborough	459 <i>d</i> ,	Laird <i>v.</i> Birkenhead Railway Co.	1538
	459 <i>g</i>	Lake <i>v.</i> Craddock	674, 1206, 1207,
Kirkby Ravensworth Hospital,			1236
<i>ex parte</i>	1161	<i>v.</i> DeLambert	1287
Kirkman <i>v.</i> Kirkman	1106	<i>v.</i> Gibson	1206, 1243
<i>v.</i> Miles	790, 793	<i>v.</i> Meacham	164 <i>f</i>
<i>v.</i> Smith	486	Lakin, <i>ex parte</i>	1354
Kitchin <i>v.</i> Kitchin	925 <i>i</i>	Lambert <i>v.</i> Lambert	1423, 1424
Kitson <i>v.</i> Kitson	1088	Lamborn <i>v.</i> Covington Co.	924 <i>a</i>
Kittredge <i>v.</i> McLaughlin	1016 <i>a</i>	Lamlee <i>v.</i> Hanman	348
Klapworth <i>v.</i> Dressler	1016 <i>d</i>	Lammot <i>v.</i> Bowley	138 <i>f</i>
Kleine <i>v.</i> Catara	1455, 1456	Lampert <i>v.</i> Lampert	1368, 1371
Kleiser <i>v.</i> Scott	499 <i>d</i>	Lampet's case	990, 1036, 1039
Klopp <i>v.</i> Lebanon Bank	499 <i>e</i>	Lamphir <i>v.</i> Creed	1387
Knifong <i>v.</i> Hendricks	895	Lamplugh <i>v.</i> Lamplugh	1198
Knight <i>v.</i> Boughton	1068 <i>a</i> , 1070	<i>v.</i> Smith	111
<i>v.</i> Bowyer	1520	Lancashire <i>v.</i> Lancashire	1464
<i>v.</i> Cameron	290	Lancaster & Carlisle Railway Co.	
<i>v.</i> Davis	566 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> N. W. Railway Co.	1561
<i>v.</i> Ellis	1067 <i>b</i>	Lance <i>v.</i> Norman	195
<i>v.</i> Gardner	925 <i>a</i>	Landell <i>v.</i> Baker	1658 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Knight	1068 to 1070, 1074,	Lane <i>v.</i> Dighton	1201, 1202, 1210,
	1384		1260
<i>v.</i> Lord Plymouth	1269, 1271,	<i>v.</i> Husband	972, 1036 <i>a</i>
	1273	<i>v.</i> Leadbetter	941
Knightley <i>v.</i> Knightley	1246, 1247	<i>v.</i> Newdigate	927
Kniskern <i>v.</i> Lutheran Church	1191 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Stacy	499 <i>e</i>
Knott, <i>ex parte</i>	416, 417, 419, 436,	<i>v.</i> Williams	676
	1034, 1215	Lanesborough <i>v.</i> Jones	1435, 1436
<i>v.</i> Cottee	1068 <i>a</i> , 1338 <i>a</i>	Lanfair <i>v.</i> Lanfair	1326 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Morgan	951	Lang <i>v.</i> Bank of U. States	130
Knowles <i>r.</i> Haughton	298, 671	<i>v.</i> Brevard	326
Knox <i>v.</i> Symmonds	1451, 1454 to	<i>v.</i> Whidden	225
	1456	Lange <i>v.</i> Work	292
Knye <i>v.</i> Moore	703, 709	Langford, <i>in re</i>	1269 <i>a</i>
Kruger <i>v.</i> Wilcox	506	<i>v.</i> Gascoyne	1269, 1280,
Kuhn <i>r.</i> Stansfield	372 <i>b</i>		1281
Kuypers <i>v.</i> Reformed Dutch		Langham <i>v.</i> Nenny	1062 <i>a</i> , 1394, 1405
Church	74 <i>d</i>	<i>v.</i> Sanford	596
Kyles <i>c.</i> Tait	1226	Langley <i>v.</i> Brown	153
		<i>v.</i> Earl of Oxford	1057, 1129
		<i>v.</i> Fisher	252
		<i>v.</i> Thomas	1065 <i>a</i>
		Langmead's Trusts, <i>in re</i>	676 <i>a</i>
		Langstaffe <i>v.</i> Fenwick	135
		Langston <i>v.</i> Boylston	807 to 809, 814
		<i>ex parte</i>	1020
		<i>v.</i> Langston	1065 <i>b</i>
		<i>v.</i> Ollivant	1284
		<i>v.</i> Tompkins	1326 <i>a</i>
		Langthorne <i>v.</i> Swinbourne	327
		Langton <i>v.</i> Horton	1035 <i>a</i> , 1040,
			1040 <i>b</i> , 1055, 1502

L.

Lacam <i>r.</i> Mertins	559, 560, 562, 576
Lacey, <i>ex parte</i>	322
<i>v.</i> Ingle	416, 417, 421
Lachlan <i>r.</i> Reynolds	203 <i>b</i>
Lackersteen <i>v.</i> Lackersteen	164 <i>b</i>
Lacon <i>r.</i> Mertins	755, 756, 758, 760,
	762, 763, 765
Lacy <i>v.</i> Anderson	1080

Langton v. Waite	724 b	Leavitt v. Palmer	114
Lanoy v. Duke of Athol	558, 559, 563, 633	Lechmere v. Earl of Carlisle	790, 973, 987, 1104, 1106
v. Duchess of Athol	1233 a, 1255, 1355	v. Charlton	574, 575, 1003, 1248
Lansdowne v. Lansdowne	116, 122, 125, 137, 513, 514, 517, 518 a	v. Fletcher	164
Lansing v. Eddy	895, 897, 1573	v. Lavie	1069
Large v. Van Doren	1018 e	Lechullier v. Castleman	69
Larkin v. Mann	654	Ledyard v. Butler	433
Larkins v. Biddle	138 f	Lee v. Alston	455, 517, 518
Lashbrooke v. Tyler	1425	v. Boak	607 a
Lasher, <i>in re</i>	1365 a	v. Brook	327
Lassels v. Cornwallis	170, 176	v. Cox	1105
Lassence v. Tierney	987 d, 1080 a	v. Haley	951 h
Latham v. Morrow	201, 293	v. Howlett	1035 a
Lathrop v. Dales	499 b	v. Kirkpatrick	1551
v. Gilbert	1372 b	v. Muggerridge	1390, 1394
La Touche v. Dunsany	401, 402, 404, 420	v. Prieaux	1380, 1382
Latourette v. Williams	1403	v. Rook	730, 850
Laughter's case	1307	Leeds v. Marine Insur. Co.	1216 a, 1217, 1437, 1437 a
Lavender v. Blackstone	374, 987 a	Banking Co, <i>in re</i>	1401 e
v. Stanton	1133	Duke of, v. Lord Amherst	518 a
Laver v. Fielder	1520 d	v. New Radnor	69, 87, 457, 622, 684, 684 b, 684 c
Lavery v. Moore	747	v. Powell	87, 99 a, 622, 684
Lavette v. Sage	234 a	v. Strafford	619
Law v. East India Co.	326	Leeke v. Bennett	604
v. Law	263, 295	Lees v. Massey	604 a
Lawless v. Shaw	1069	v. Mosley	1065 b
Lawley v. Hooper	186	v. Nuttall	315, 316, 1211 a
Lawrence v. Beverly	790	Lefie v. Bailee	140
v. Cornell	499	Legal v. Miller	161
v. Kidder	292	Legard v. Hodges	1231
v. Lawrence	81 a, 1081, 1088	v. Johnson	1422, 1424, 1425, 1428
v. Smith	931, 932, 936 to 938	Leger v. Bonaffe	140
Lawson v. Hudson	576	Legg v. Goldwire	160
v. Laud	767	Legge v. Asgil	1182
v. Lawson	1208	Leggett v. Dubios	1201 b
Lawton v. Champion	138 f	v. Postley	74 a
Layer v. Nelson	492	Legh v. Norbury	1065 a
Lazell v. Lazell	85	Le Guen v. Gouverneur	895
Lea v. Hinton	638 a	Lehman v. Logan	1469
Leach v. Fobes	724 a, 793 r	Leicester v. Rose	324
v. Leach	1276	Leigh v. Barry	1280
v. Taft	724 b	v. Macauley	840, 1257, 1259
v. Trollop	1504	v. Munroe	390
Leader v. Purday	939	v. Norbury	1065 b
Leaf v. Coles	673 a	v. Park	59
Leake v. Leake	1109, 1474	v. Rook	639
v. Morrice	760	Leighton v. Leighton	859, 1446, 1447
v. Robinson	604 a	Leith Banking Co. v. Bell	215
Leardett v. Johnson	935	Leman v. Newman	576
Leaming v. Sherratt	604 a	v. Whitley	758, 1196, 1199
Leary v. Cheshire	499	Lempster v. Pomfret	74 a, 704
Leather C. Co. v. Am. Leather Cl. Co.	951 c	Lench v. Lench	1201, 1210, 1232, 1260

Le Neve v. Le Neve	186, 397	Linton v. Hyde	1196
Lenon v. Napper	89, 741, 748, 775, 1014	Lippencott v. Barker	1036
Lentillon v. Moffat	1036	Lisle v. Liddle	700, 700 a
Lenty v. Hillas	157	Lister v. Pickford	1273 e
Leonard v. Earl of Sussex	983	v. Turner	375
v. Jackson	355, 359, 427	Litterdale v. Robinson	499 d
v. Leonard	121, 122, 124, 130	Little v. Cooper	74 c
to 132, 140, 147, 148, 217		Livingston v. Clarkson	656 b
v. Simpson	550	v. Livingston	684, 684 b, 918, 927 to 929, 1368, 1372
Lepypre v. Farr	74 d	v. Lynch	959
Leroy v. Veeder	71, 82	v. Newkirk	64 f, 571, 572, 577
Leslie v. Guthrie	1038, 1055	v. Ogden	927
L'Estrange v. L'Estrange	1040 d	v. Tompkins	1319, 1322
Le Texier v. Anspach	1496	Lloyd v. Atwood	322
Lett v. Morris	1041, 1044	v. Banks	1023 e
Levy v. Barker	227	v. Branton	284, 287
v. Levy	1447	v. Collett	776
Lewin v. Okeley	64 f, 552	v. Galbraith	564 c
Lewis v. Baird	404, 529	v. Gurden	906
v. Carpenter	1226	v. Higbee	164 f
v. Chapman	959 a	v. Johnes	487
ex parte	1476	v. Loaring	709, 710
r. Fullerton	939, 941	v. Lloyd	285, 291 c, 604 a, 1164
v. Lechnere	723	v. London Ch. & D.	
v. Llewellyn	162 a	Railw. Co.	778 e
v. Maddocks	1210, 1231, 1260	v. Mason	1417
v. Matthews	1397 a	v. Read	1201, 1201 a, 1202, 1204
v. Palmer	4992	v. Spillet	969, 1199, 1201, 1202
v. Mew	405	v. Williams	1417, 1418
v. Pead	236	Loaring, ex parte	1226
v. Stein	927	Lockard v. Lockard	894
Lexington, &c. Co. v. Applegate	927	Lockerson v. Stillwell	1231 c
Liddard v. Liddard	1068 b	Lockey v. Lockey	763
Liddell v. Norton	1061, 1261 a	Lockley v. Eldridge	473
Lidderdale v. Montrose	1040 d	Lockton v. Lockton	1060
Liebman v. Harcourt	1210, 1260	Lockwood v. Ewer	1031, 1033
Light v. Light	1365 b	Lodge v. Lisely	1503 b
Ligon v. Rogers	108	v. Turman	1018 b
Like v. Berresford	1412, 1418	Loffus v. Maw	1549 d
Lilia v. Aiery	1368, 1400, 1401	Loftin v. Espy	709
Lillie v. Legh	737 a	Logan v. Fairlie	1354 b
Lilly v. Hayes	1041	v. Gigley	298
Lincoln v. Rutland and Burlington R. R.	807	v. Simmons	273
Lincoln, Countess of, v. Newcastle	974, 983 to 985	v. Wienholt	715, 751, 786
Lincoln, Lady, v. Pelham	1065 b	Loker v. Rolle	619
v. Wright	1522 a	Lomas v. Wright	565
Lindenau v. Desborough	216	London and Birmingham Railway	
Lindsay v. Lynch	763, 764, 766, 767	v. Winter	755, 770, 770 a
r. Pleasants	790	London, City of, v. Mitford	1324
Lingan v. Simpson	667, 709, 710	Londonderry v. Baker	793 i
v. Sowray	790	Long v. Bowring	793 l
Lingard v. Bromley	505	v. Dennis	286, 287
Lingood v. Croucher	1500	v. Ricketts	288
v. Eade	1452	v. Stewart	1263
Lining v. Peyton	1134	v. Walkinson	1065 b
Linn v. Barkey	157	Longford v. Eyre	174

Longhurst v. Star Ins. Co.	138 <i>l</i>	Lumsden v. Buchanan	1273 <i>c</i>
Longman v. Winchester	900, 940	Lunn v. Thornton	1040
Longmate v. Ledger	238 <i>a</i>	Lupton v. Lupton	92, 572, 1246
Longmore v. Elcum	1289 <i>a</i>	v. White	468, 623
Longuet v. Scawen	1019	Lush v. Wilkinson	356, 360, 362, 363
Lonsdale v. Littledale	1450, 1500	Lutheran Church v. Maschop	241
Loomis v. Hudson	138 <i>l</i>	Lutkins v. Leigh	564, 565
v. Loomis	1047	Luttrell v. Lord Waltham	252, 256
v. Tift	350	Lyddon v. Moss	312 <i>a</i>
Lopdell v. Creagh	529	Lyde v. Munn	722, 729
Lord v. Sargeant	499	v. Mynn	1231
v. Wightwick	1248 <i>d</i>	Lyford v. Thurston	982 <i>a</i>
v. Wormleighton	550	Lynan v. Briggs	564 <i>c</i> , 1233 <i>a</i>
Lord Durham v. Whariton	1111	v. Estes	1436
Lorimer v. Lorimer	509, 655	v. United Ins. Co.	152, 153
Loring v. Bacon	1235		157, 158
<i>ex parte</i>	1226	Lynch v. Sumrall	72
Lorkey v. Lorkey	511	Lyne v. Sumrall	1382
Loscombe v. Russell	260	Lyon v. Lyon	131
v. Wintringham	1181	v. Mitchell	1067 <i>b</i>
Lothrop v. Amherst Bank	1049	v. Richmond	111, 113, 116, 126,
Lovat v. Lord Ranelagh	1324		131, 137, 138
Love v. Baker	890, 900	v. Saunders	116
Loveridge v. Cooper	1035 <i>a</i> , 1057, 1196	Lyons v. Blenkin	1339, 1341
Low v. Barchard	244	v. Miller	74 <i>c</i>
v. Burron	989	Lysaght v. Royse	1336, 1362, 1364,
Lowe v. Joliffe	1447		1365
v. Peers	274, 275, 1318	v. Walker	459 <i>a</i> , 459 <i>g</i>
v. Richardson	815	Lytton, Sir Ed. Bulwer, v. Great	
v. Thomas	1074 <i>d</i>	N. Railway Co.	1567
Lowell v. Daniels	1553 <i>a</i>		
Lowndes v. Chisolm	138 <i>f</i>		
v. Cornford	808		
v. Lane	195, 778		
Lowry v. Bourdieu	298		
v. Muldrow	724 <i>a</i>		
Lowson v. Copeland	1274		
Lowther v. Carlton	408, 410		
v. Lowther	315, 709		
Lowthian v. Hasel	413, 417, 1034		
Loxley v. Heath	987 <i>a</i>		
Lubbock v. Potts	298		
Lucas v. Calcraft	628		
v. Commerford	716, 726		
v. King	653		
v. Lucas	1375, 1380		
v. Warswick	146		
Luck's Appeal	1018 <i>b</i>		
Luckett v. Williamson	793 <i>r</i>		
Lucketts v. Townsend	1033		
Ludlow v. Grayall	1217		
v. Simons	67, 71, 80, 326, 449,		
	451, 456, 457, 458,		
	464, 522		
v. Van Ness	440 <i>b</i>		
Luff v. Lord	1277 <i>c</i>		
Lumb v. Milnes	1381 to 1383		
Lumley v. Wagner	722 <i>a</i> , 958, 958 <i>a</i> ,		
	959 <i>a</i>		

M.

Maber v. Hobbs	972, 1045, 1384
Macartney v. Graham	86 <i>a</i>
Macaulay v. Phillips	1410, 1412, 1413,
	1415, 1417, 1418, 1426
v. Shackell	1493 <i>a</i> , 1514,
	1515
Macbryde v. Weekes	776
MacCabe v. Hussey	695
Macclesfield v. Davis	709
Macdonald v. Bell	501
Macedon Plank Road Co. v. Lap-	
ham	1558
Machir v. Morse	803
Mackay v. Brackett	891
Mackenzie v. Johnston	457 to 459, 464
v. Mackenzie	1065 <i>b</i>
v. Robinson	1026
Mackintosh v. Townsend	1184, 1185
Mackreth v. Symmons	64 <i>d</i> , 396, 416,
	789, 1201, 1217 to 1219,
	1220 to 1222, 1224, 1226
	to 1228
Maclin v. Richardson	943
Maddeford v. Anstwick	199, 220, 323
Maddison v. Chapman	604 <i>a</i> , 1074 <i>e</i>

Maddox v. Maddox	291 <i>b</i>	Marak v. Abel	298
<i>v. Simmons</i>	229 <i>b</i>	Maraton v. Squire	651
Madeiras v. Hill	1307	Marble v. Whitney	138 <i>k</i>
Madison v. Andrew	1061, 1202	Marbury v. Brooks	1036, 1037
Magdalena Steam Nav. Co.	1537	March v. Davison 74 <i>a</i> , 74 <i>b</i> ,	1483, 1495
Magie v. The Dutch Church	1194 <i>d</i>	Marchington v. Vernon	1041
Magruder v. Peters	499 <i>d</i>	Mardree v. Mardree	1403
Maguire v. Maguire	1328	Margaret v. Regius Professors in	
Maher v. Hobbs	273	Cambridge	1175
Mahon v. Savage	1065 <i>b</i>	Margetts v. Barringer	1382
Main v. Melbourne	760	Margrave v. Le Hooke	1023
Mainwaring v. Newman	679	Marine Ins. Co. v. Hodgson 105,	887,
Maitland v. Backhouse	309	894 to 897	
<i>v. Irvine</i>	309	Markham v. Mayor, &c.	929 <i>a</i>
Major v. Lansley 1380, 1391, 1393,	1412, 1413	Marks v. Pell	1018, 1019
Makeham v. Hooper	1180	Marlborough v. Godolphin 105 <i>a</i> ,	1388
Makepiece v. Rogers	462 <i>a</i>	Marples v. Bainbridge	285, 289
Malcolm v. Charlesworth	1055	Marquand v. N. Y. Manuf. Co.	677
<i>v. O'Callagan</i>	287, 290	Marquis of Downshire v. Lady	
Malden v. Merrill	108, 139, 165	Sandys	912, 915
Male v. Smith	895, 629	<i>Bute v. The Glamorgan-</i>	
Malet, in re	164 <i>d</i>	<i>shire Co.</i>	610, 621
Malim v. Keighley	1068, 1068 <i>a</i>	Ormand <i>v. Kinnenly</i>	515
Malin v. Garnsey	371	Townshend <i>v. Stangroom</i>	
<i>v. Malin</i>	236	737 <i>a</i>	
Malins v. Brown	761	Marr v. Bennett	400
<i>v. Freeman</i>	770	Marriott v. Marriott	536, 590
Maloney v. Horace	1553 <i>b</i>	Marryatts v. White	459 <i>b</i> , 459 <i>d</i>
Maltby's case	215	Marsh v. Billings	951 <i>a</i>
Man v. Marpherson	440	<i>v. Lee</i>	412, 414
<i>v. Ward</i>	184	<i>v. Pike</i>	499
Manahan v. Gibbons	1281	Marshall v. Baltimore and Ohio	
Manaton v. Molesworth	862	Railroad	293 <i>b</i>
Manby v. Brunke	1521	<i>v. Collett</i>	137
Manchester, L., &c., Railway Co.		<i>v. Colman</i>	667, 673
<i>v. The Workshop Board of</i>		<i>v. Holloway</i>	1268 <i>a</i>
Health	925 <i>a</i>	<i>v. Ross</i>	951 <i>g</i>
Manchester School case	1494 <i>f</i>	<i>v. Rutton</i> 1397, 1400, 1428	
Mandeville v. Mandeville 828, 836, 839		<i>v. Stevens</i>	321
<i>v. Welsh</i> 1020, 1040, 1043,		<i>v. Watson</i>	673 <i>a</i>
1044, 1056		Marshfield v. Weston	443, 1528
Manes v. Durant	273	Marten v. Margham	1176
Manlove v. Bale	1227	Martico v. Righter	1540
Manly v. Slason	1226	Martin v. Headon	929 <i>c</i>
Mann v. Ballett	1175	<i>v. Heathcote</i>	1520
<i>v. Beterly</i>	238	<i>v. Martin</i> 64 <i>f</i> , 546, 547, 549,	
<i>v. Thompson</i>	604 <i>a</i>	890, 1374, 1416, 1419	
Manners v. Manners	650	<i>v. Mitchell</i>	734, 735
Manning v. Lechmere	1527	<i>v. Morgan</i>	213, 214
<i>v. Manning</i>	1268, 1277	<i>v. Nicolls</i>	903, 1576
<i>v. Purcell</i>	1449 <i>a</i>	<i>v. Nutkin</i>	958
<i>v. Spooner</i>	571	<i>v. Perryman</i>	652, 656 <i>a</i>
Manning's case	990	<i>v. Rebow</i>	1208
Mansel v. Mansel	994	<i>v. Stiles</i>	927
Manser v. Black	161	<i>v. Westbrook</i>	694 <i>a</i>
Mansfield's case	229	<i>v. Wright</i>	934
Many v. Beekman Iron Co	1483	Martindale v. Martin	1143
Mapps v. Sharpe	1018 <i>e</i>	<i>v. Piguot</i>	1233 <i>a</i>
		Martinius v. Helmuth	808, 814

- Martyn *v.* Hind 1041
 Marvin *v.* Elwood 807, 816
 Marwood *v.* Turner 996
 Mason *v.* Armitage 161, 724, 742
 v. Bogg 564 *b*, 675
 v. Crosby 193
 v. Day 1357
 v. Gardiner 64 *e*, 301
 v. Goodburne 1505, 1511
 v. Hamilton 820
 v. Masters 1403
 v. Pearson 141
 Massenburgh *v.* Ash 974
 Massey *v.* Banner 458, 459, 1269, 1270
 v. Davies 315, 462
 v. Parker 1381, 1383
 v. Shermen 1068
 v. Watts 743, 744, 899, 1297
 Master *v.* Fuller 1400, 1401
 v. Kirton 673
 Masters *v.* Masters 566, 1103
 Mather *v.* Frazer 700 *a*
 Mathew Manning's case 844
 Mathews *v.* Bliss 207
 v. Jones 954
 v. Terwilliger 138 *f*
 Mathewson *v.* Stockdale 940
 Matthews *v.* Aikin 499 *b*
 v. Cartwright 412, 417, 1034
 v. Feaver 367
 v. Newby 542
 v. Walwyn 523
 v. Warner 1464
 Mattison *v.* Tunfield 1065 *c*
 Mattocks *v.* Tremain 1474
 Maturin *v.* Tredinnick 203 *e*
 Maude *v.* Maude 1074 *b*
 Maunder *v.* Lloyd 683 *a*
 Maundrell *v.* Maundrell 395, 410, 412,
 1392, 1502
 Mawhorton *v.* Armstrong 698
 Mawman *v.* Tegg 935, 942
 Mawson *v.* Stork 330, 374
 Maxwell *v.* Montacute 768, 1018
 May *v.* Bennett 93
 v. Coffin 111
 v. Hook 891
 v. May 706 *b*
 Mayhew *v.* Crickett 324, 326, 498, 499
 Mayne *v.* Bredwin 1341
 v. Griswold 80, 81, 1521
 Mayor of Brecon *v.* Seymour 416
 of Colchester *v.* Lowton 700
 of Coventry *v.* Attorney
 General 1289
 of Gloucester *v.* Wood 1065 *d*,
 1069
 of Hamilton *v.* Hodson 1065 *b*,
 1071
 Mayor of York *v.* Pilkington 855, 856,
 893
 Mayott *v.* Mayott 1065 *b*
 McAninch *v.* Laughlin 116, 151
 McAulay *v.* Western Vt. R. R.
 Co. 1231 *b*
 McCall *v.* Harrison 1250
 v. Parker 240
 McCartee *v.* Orphan Asylum So-
 ciety 976, 1154 *d*
 McCarthy *v.* Decaix 120, 137
 v. Goold 294, 367, 1039,
 1040 *d*
 McCartney *v.* Bostwick 982 *a*
 v. Calhoun 321
 McCleary *v.* Besine 499 *b*
 McClellan *v.* Kinnaird 904
 McClung's Appeal 959 *l*
 McClure *v.* Harris 1226
 McCollum *v.* Peewitt 1493 *b*
 McCord *v.* O'Chiltree 1146, 1154,
 1154 *c*, 1156 *a*, 1166, 1328
 McCormick *v.* Garnett 140
 v. Malin 239
 McCrae *v.* Hollis 146
 McCrea *v.* Purmost 736 *a*
 McCrillis *v.* Bartlett 228
 McCulloch *v.* Dawes 579 *a*
 v. Gregory 203 *b*, 449 *b*
 in re 1339
 McCullough's Appeal 291 *b*
 McCullum *v.* Gourley 298
 McDaniels *v.* Bank of Rutland 138 *f*
 v. Colvin 1023 *d*
 McDonald *v.* Neilson 64 *e*, 244
 v. Richardson 1277 *a*
 McDonough *v.* Shewbridge 1025
 McDougal *v.* Armstrong 704, 846
 McDougald *v.* Capron 1023
 McDowall *v.* The Blackstone Ca-
 nal Co. 459 *a*
 McDurmut *v.* Strong 368
 McElfresh *v.* Sohley 1080, 1086
 McElwee *v.* Sutton 74 *a*
 McFadden *v.* Jenkins 793 *a*, 973
 McGee *v.* McGee 1469
 McGillicuddy *v.* Cook 606
 McGowan *v.* McGowan 1201 *e*
 McGowin *v.* Remington 74 *b*, 724 *a*
 McGregor *v.* Chase 1035 *g*, 1037 *b*
 v. Deal and Dover
 Railway 959 *f*
 v. Topham 1447
 McHenry *v.* Hagard 824 *a*
 McIlvaine *v.* Gethen 291 *b*
 McIntier *v.* Shaw 1018 *b*
 McKay *v.* Green 546, 549
 McKee *v.* Judd 1040 *g*
 McKelway *v.* Armour 143

McKenzie v. Johnson	691	Merchants' Bank v. Stevenson	1252 b
v. Powis	1521	Meredith v. Heneage	1068 a, 1069, 1070
McKibbin v. Brown	736 c	v. Watson	607 b
McKim v. Voorhees	900	v. Wynn	774
McKinley v. Irvine	321	Merewether v. Herran	336
McKinnel v. Robinson	308	v. Shaw	272, 391
McKinney v. Pope	304	Merriam v. Harsen	1395
McKnight v. Robbins	720	Merrick's Trusts Re	1123 b
v. Taylor	1520	Merrill v. Bartlett	1242
McLachlan v. Tait	604 a	v. Englesby	1046 a
McLain v. School Directors	1171 a	Merrill's Administrator v. Merrill's Heirs	987 a
McLaughlin v. Bank of Potomac	362	Merrimack Manuf. Co. v. Garner	951 c
McLean v. Longlands	1375	Merrit v. Lambert	1049
v. Towle	499	Merritt v. Brown	793 u
v. Walker	1030	v. Shrewsbury & Chester Railw. Co.	1561
McLearn v. McLellan	1217, 1218, 1248	Merritt, <i>ex parte</i>	891
McLemore v. Powell	326	Merry v. Ryves	257
McLeod v. Drummond	422, 424, 579, 580, 693, 1129	Mertins v. Joliffe	400, 410
McMahon v. Fawcett	499 d	Mesgrett v. Mesgrett	257
McNaughten v. Partridge	112, 138 f	Messer v. Boyle	1027 a
McNeal v. Glen	369	Messiter v. Wright	632
McNeil v. Magee	771, 1502	Mestayer v. Gillespie	176, 256, 779, 781
McNeill v. Cahill	268, 380, 382	Metcalf v. Hervey	74 d, 806, 809, 811, 812, 821, 1490
McQueen v. Farquhar	255, 410, 1449 a	v. Pulvertoft	406, 908
McVicar v. Wolcott	895	v. Putnam	138 f
Meach v. Meach	606	Metcalfe, <i>in re</i>	1181
v. Perry	761	v. Archbishop of York	1231
Meacham v. Sterne	1268	v. Beckwith	613, 617
Meacher v. Young	1354 a	Methald v. Walbank	294
Mead v. Combs	372 b	Methodist Episcopal Church v. Jaques	1394 to 1396
v. Heirs of Longdon	99	Metler v. Metler's Estate	959 l
v. Merritt	744, 899, 900, 1291	Metropolitan Cos. Society v. Brown	147, 710 a
v. Orrery	400, 405, 406, 422, 424, 580, 1017	Meux v. Bell	399, 824, 1035 a, 1047
Meals v. Meals	598	v. Howell	1036
Mechanics' Bank of Alexandria v. Seton	724, 1257	v. Maltby	400
Mechanics' Bank of Alexandria v. Lynn	769, 775, 776	Meyn v. Belcher	255
Mechanics' Building & Loan Ass. v. Conover	1035 b	Michaud v. Girod	322, 1520 a
Medlicott v. Bowes	1437	Micklethwait v. Micklethwait	518 a
v. O'Donnel	410, 420, 436, 631	Middlecome v. Marlow	372
Medworth v. Pope	1065 c	Middleditch v. Sharland	462
Meek v. Kettlewell	433, 729, 793 a	Middleton v. Jackson	856
Meeley v. Webber	481	v. Middleton	187
Meliorucchi v. Royal Ex. Ins. Company	1435	v. Spicer	1180, 1196 b, 1208
Meller v. Woods	1026	Middleton's case	1152
Mellish v. Mellish	180	Middletown Bank v. Russ	64 k, 71, 72, 74 e, 456
v. Robertson	138 f	Milbourn v. Ewart	1371
Melpott v. St. George's Hospital	604 a	Mildmay v. Hungerford	113, 124
Mendes v. Barnard	1483	v. Mildmay	919, 1425
Mendizabel v. Machado	1414	Miles v. Caldwell	1573
Merchants' Bank v. Davis	74 c		
v. Packard	824		

Miles v. Miles	1528	Mitchell v. Koecker	1494
v. Stephens	140	v. Mitchell	1248 <i>c</i>
v. Williams	1039	v. Reynolds	292
Milhau v. Sharp	929 <i>a</i>	v. Smith	1495
Millard v. Eyre	1287	v. Winslow	1040, 1055
v. Harvey	1522 <i>b</i>	Mitford v. Mitford	1088, 1228, 1229, 1408, 1411 to 1413
Millegan v. Cooke	779	v. Reynolds	1164, 1184
Miller v. Chetwood	161	Mocatta v. Murgatroyd	390
v. Chittendon	1154 <i>c</i>	Modlen v. Snowball	793 <i>i</i>
v. Colter	707	Mogg v. Hodges	565, 569, 570, 1180
v. Conklin	1036	v. Mogg	1069 <i>b</i>
v. Ewer	1562	Moggridge v. Thackwell	1070, 1141, 1153, 1155, 1164, 1165 to 1168, 1174, 1181, 1182, 1189, 1190, 1192
v. Harris	1338 <i>a</i>	Mohawk Bridge Co. v. Utica and Schenectady Railroad Co.	921, 923, 924 <i>a</i>
v. Jeffress	606 <i>a</i>	Mohawk and Hudson Railroad Co. v. Archer	925 to 927
v. McIntire	529, 1520	Mohawk and Hudson Railroad Co. v. Chute	806, 813 <i>a</i> , 824
v. Miller	606, 607 <i>a</i> , 607 <i>c</i>	Mold v. Wheatcroft	1549
v. Ord	499, 502	Mole v. Mansfield	653
v. Rowan	1164	Molesworth, <i>ex parte</i>	1354
v. Sable	1182, 1191 <i>a</i>	Molton v. Camroux	228, 229 <i>a</i>
v. Sawyer	499	Monaghan, <i>in re</i> ,	1365
v. Warmington	615, 619, 620, 646, 647, 653, 658	Monck v. Lord Monck	1117
Milles v. Wikes	1882	Monckey v. Monckey	1026
Millington v. Fox	951, 951 <i>a</i>	Monell v. Monell	1281, 1283, 1284
Mills v. Banks	1022, 1064, 1064 <i>b</i>	Money v. Jordan	876
v. Dennis	1025, 1026	Money penny v. Bristow	1437 <i>a</i>
v. Eden	499, 558	Monis v. Nixon	1018
v. Farmer	1141, 1153, 1164, 1165 to 1168, 1170, 1170 <i>a</i> , 1171, 1181, 1182, 1190	Monk v. Cooper	101, 102
v. Hyde	496 <i>a</i>	Montacute v. Maxwell	330, 374, 768
v. Mills	97, 604, 632 <i>a</i>	Montague v. Dudman	893, 1483, 1494, 1497
v. ———	1450	v. Lord Sandwich	361
Milne v. Walton	1035 <i>c</i>	Montefiore v. Browne	1023 <i>d</i>
Milner v. Mills	790	v. Guedalla	1115 <i>a</i>
v. Milner	179, 180	Montefiori v. Montefiori	271
v. Slater	571, 572, 577	Montesquieu v. Sandys	311, 313
Milnes v. Busk	1371, 1395, 1396, 1397	Moodaly v. Morton	74 <i>a</i> , 1483, 1495, 1514
v. Genry	1458 <i>a</i>	Moodie v. Bannister	1521 <i>b</i>
Miltown, Earl of, v. Stewart	695, 695 <i>a</i>	Moody v. Payne	677, 678
Milward v. Hallet	1241	v. Reid	170, 176
v. Thanet, Earl of	771, 776	v. Walters	979, 995, 996
Minet v. Hyde	1418	v. Wright	1040
v. Vulliamy	1186, 1300	Mooers v. White	529
Minot v. Boston Asylum	1170	Moor v. Black	626, 628
Minshaw v. Jordan	700	v. Raigsback	1214 <i>a</i>
Minter v. Wraith	1065 <i>b</i>	v. Rycault	372
Minton v. Kirwood	771, 793 <i>o</i>	Moore v. Blake	742, 771, 776
Minturn v. Seymour	433, 706 <i>a</i> , 793 <i>b</i> , 987	v. Bowman	1553 <i>b</i>
Mirehouse v. Scaife	1520	v. Cable	1238
Miss. & Mo. Railw. v. Ward	925 <i>h</i>	v. Crofton	372, 433, 793 <i>a</i> , 973, 987, 988
Mitchell v. Bunch	899, 900, 1291, 1473, 1475		
v. Dorrs	928, 929		
v. Greene	70		
v. Harris	1457		
v. Hayne	807, 824		
v. Kingman	225		

Moore v. Darton	606	Morris v. Wright	941 <i>a</i>
v. Edwards	756, 757, 765	Morris Canal Co. v. Emmatt	144 <i>a</i> , 195
v. Ellis	1370	Morrison v. Arbutnot	266, 269
v. Greg	716, 726	v. Arnold	1445, 1447, 1516
v. Hilton	1111	v. Beckwith	1233 <i>a</i>
v. McMellen	1456 <i>a</i>	v. Marvin	499 <i>b</i>
v. McNamara	405, 908	v. Turnour	756
v. Moore	90, 92	Morse v. Roach	1449
v. Petchell	1521 <i>f</i>	v. Royal	312, 313, 322, 345
v. Usher	806, 807, 1049	Mortimer v. Capper	104, 131, 147, 150
Moorhouse v. Colvin	767, 787	v. Orchard	765, 1528
Moravian Society, in re	1287	v. Wright	1347 <i>b</i>
Mordaunt v. Thowld	625, 628	Mortlock v. Buller	186, 693, 734, 758, 796
More v. Freeman	1372	Morton v. Naylor	1044, 1047
v. More	1357	Moseley v. Virgin	716, 725 to 727
Morecock v. Dickens	402	Moses v. Levi	1280 <i>a</i> , 1281
Morehead v. Eades	203 <i>f</i>	v. Lewis	458, 462
Moreland v. Richardson	959 <i>c</i>	v. Macfarlane	1256
Morely v. Bonge	1528	v. Murgatroyd	64 <i>f</i> , 551, 792, 1037
Mores v. Huish	1390	Mosher v. Read	889
Morey v. Bigwood	749 <i>b</i>	Moss v. Adams	459 <i>g</i>
Morgan v. Dillon	1332 to 1334, 1339	v. Gallimore	1017
ex parte	1232	Mossop v. Eadon	85, 86
v. Harris	74 <i>d</i>	Motley v. Downman	951
v. Higgins	312 <i>a</i>	Mott v. Buxton	983
v. Marsack	808	Motteux v. London Assur. Co.	153, 158, 160, 770 <i>a</i>
v. Mathier	1452, 1454, 1456	Moulson v. Moulson	1115
v. Morgan	604, 776, 778	Mountfort, ex parte	1020, 1033, 1338, 1341, 1354
v. Seymour	493	Moyle v. Gayles	1206
v. Sherrard	553	Mucklestone v. Browne	1208
Morgan's Heirs v. Morgan	778	v. Bruen	297
Morice v. The Bishop of Durham	1164	Muir v. Leach	677
Morison v. Moat	952	v. Schenck	64 <i>d</i> , 421 <i>c</i> , 1038, 1039
Morley v. Morley	1023 <i>a</i> , 1269	v. Schenectady	1035 <i>a</i>
v. Rennaldson	280, 289	Mulhall v. Quinn	1040, 1056
v. Thompson	815	Mulherer v. Gillespie	1122
v. Wright	1413	Mullins v. Hussey	769 <i>b</i>
Mornsby v. Blainire	1065 <i>a</i> , 1065 <i>b</i>	Mumford v. Murray	1282, 1284, 1411
Morphett v. Jones	759, 762, 763	v. Nicoll	1242
Morrall v. Marlow	1038	Mumma v. The Potomac Co.	1252
Morret v. Paske	315, 412, 416 to 418, 1211	Munday v. Culver	1318
Morrice v. Bank of England	544, 546, 547, 549, 553, 554, 557, 890	Mundy v. Lord Howe	1354 <i>a</i>
v. Bishop of Durham	1070, 1155, 1156, 1182	v. Mundy	624, 626, 649
Morrington v. Keane	1231 <i>a</i>	Munson v. Munson	1573
Morris v. Berkley's Lessees	927	Murat v. The Shrewsbury and Ches-	959
v. Burroughs	309	ter Railway Co.	709
v. Clarkson	255	Murphy v. Clark	395, 405, 406, 908, 1257, 1262
v. Colman	292, 958, 959 <i>a</i>	Murray v. Ballou	1397, 1400
v. Kearsley	674	v. Barlee	939
v. Kelly	950	v. Bogue	1520
v. McCulloch	295, 300	v. Coster	395, 406
v. McNeill	1494	v. Finster	894
v. Morris	518 <i>a</i> , 675	v. Graham	
v. Remington	744 <i>a</i>		
v. Stephenson	731, 734, 735		

Murray v. Lichburn	421 <i>c</i>	Neville v. Fortesque	604
v. Lilburn	908, 1038, 1047, 1258, 1260, 1262	v. Merchant's Fire Ins. Company	722
v. Lord Elibank	1403, 1406, 1407, 1415, 1417, 1418	v. Wilkinson	191, 192, 220, 267, 271, 298, 387
v. Murray	677, 1253	Nevius v. Dunlap	138 <i>l</i>
v. Tolland	526, 1437	New Bedford Savings Inst. v. Fair- haven Bank	499
Murrell v. Cox	1280 <i>a</i> , 1281	New B. & C. Railw. & L. Co. v. Muggeridge	1545
Murrey v. Neill	675	New B. & C. Railw. & L. Co. v. Conybeare	203 <i>c</i>
Myer v. Crawford	499 <i>b</i>	Newburgh v. Bickerstaffe	511
Myers v. Hewitt	701	v. Newburgh	180
v. United G. & L. A. Co.	507	Newburgh Turnpike Co. v. Miller	917, 927
Myerscough, <i>ex parte</i>	1338, 1354		
N.			
Nab v. Nab	972	Newbury, <i>in re</i> ,	1347 <i>e</i>
Nairne v. Prowse	1220, 1224, 1226	Newby v. Skinner	793
Nalred v. Gilman	433	Newcastle, Duchess of, v. Pelham	703, 1493
Nantes v. Corroek	236, 367, 1397	Newcomb v. Bonham	1019
Nash v. Earl of Derby	1326	Newell v. Stiles	138 <i>f</i>
v. Hodgson	1521 <i>b</i>	New England Bank v. Lewis	1036 <i>a</i>
v. Morley	1155, 1164	Newhall v. Buckingham	677
National Exchange Co. v. Drew	193 <i>a</i>	Newham v. May	794, 796, 797
National Fire Ins. Co. v. Loomis	201	Newland v. Champion	423, 581
Nations v. Hawkins	704	Newlands v. Paynter	1381, 1384
Natusch v. Irving	959, 1556	Newman v. Barton	503, 1251
Navulshaw v. Brownrigg	459	v. Chapman	406
Naylor v. Wetherell	1094	v. Franco	1494
v. Winch	113, 121, 124, 131, 244	v. Godfrey	1499
Neal, Sir Paul's case	1375, 1387	v. Milner	699, 702
Neale v. Crepps	918 <i>a</i>	v. Newman	1093, 1098
v. Neale	113, 130, 131	v. Payne	312, 523
Neate v. Duke of Marlborough	1216 <i>b</i> , 1217	v. Rogers	776
Neatherly v. Ripley	793 <i>r</i>	v. Rusham	434, 435
Neatherway v. Fry	604 <i>a</i>	New Orleans, City of, v. United States	921
Neave v. Lord Anderton	562	Newport v. Bury	1268 <i>a</i>
Nedby v. Nedby	1384	New River Co. v. Graves	856
Neely v. Anderson	315	Newry & Enniskillen Railw. v. Ul- ster Railw.	1563
Neff v. Miller	643	Newson v. McLendon	642, 644
Neil v. Midland	164 <i>h</i>	Newstead v. Johnstone	1208
Neild v. Smith	785	v. Preston	1201
Neilson v. Blight	972, 1037	v. Reid	1384
Neimcewicz v. Ghan	1373	Newton v. Bennet	64 <i>f</i> , 552
v. Booth	1277	v. Charlton	325 <i>a</i>
v. Bridges	794	v. Hunt	338
v. Duncome	228, 1364	v. Preston	1201
v. Stephenson	731, 734, 735	v. Rowse	472
v. Stocker	385	New York Ice Co. v. N. W. Ins. Co.	164 <i>f</i>
Nelthrop v. Hill	90, 92	New York Printing and Dyeing Establishment v. Fitch	928
Nesbit v. Berridge	337 <i>b</i>	Niagara Falls Bridge Co. v. Great W. Railw.	925 <i>g</i>
v. Murry	1208	Nicholas v. Adams	606 <i>a</i>
v. Tredineck	1211	v. Nicholas	597, 599, 600
Nestor, The Brig	1005		
Neves v. Scott	986, 1370		

Nicholl v. Jones	693 o	Norwich & W. Railw. v. Storey	74 e
Nicholls v. Leeson	111	Nott v. Hill	331
Nichols v. Bellows	302	Nottidge v. Prince	239 a
v. Chalie	1450, 1451	Nourse v. Finch	1208
v. Crisp	1208	v. Gregory	74
v. Danvers	1424	Novello v. James	959 d
r. Gould	337	Nowell v. Nowell	665 a
v. Judkin	1122	v. Roake	1072 a
v. Nichols	239	Nowlan v. Nelligham	1072
v. Peak	1134	Noys v. Mordaunt	1077, 1080
v. Roe	1450, 1451, 1454	Nugent v. Gifford	422, 579, 580, 1128,
v. Stratton	292		1129
Nicholson v. Hooper	385	v. Vetrone	1361 a
v. Janeway	372 b	Nunn v. Fabian	1537
v. Revell	112, 498 a	Nurse v. Craig	1401
v. Sherman	532	Nutbrown v. Thornton	709, 710, 724,
v. Squire	1358		724 a, 906, 926
Nickerson v. Easton	240	Nutt v. Nutt	180 a
Nickolson v. Knowles	817	Nye v. Moseley	298
Nicoll v. Mumford	677, 972, 1036 a,		
	1037, 1243		
Niell v. Morley	228		
Nightingale v. Goulburn	1155, 1156 a,		
	1164		
v. Lawson	487		
Nisbet v. Smith	324, 327, 629, 849,		
	883		
Niven v. Belknap	765		
v. Spickerman	504		
Noel v. Robinson	90, 92, 503, 539,		
	597, 1251		
v. Ward	704		
Norcott v. Gordon	1088		
Norcross v. Widgery	397		
Norman v. Morrill	566		
Normanby v. Duke of Devonshire	738		
Norris v. Chambres	683 a, 957 b		
r. Clark	632 a		
v. Le Neve	315		
v. Norris	565		
v. Wilkinson	1020		
North Am. Land Co. v. Ansall	250		
Strafford	622, 684, 684 b, 686		
North British Ins. Co. v. Lloyd	215		
North, Lord, v. Pardon	1208		
v. Valk	770, 792		
in re	1341		
Northcote v. Duke	1320, 1323, 1326 a		
Northey v. Northey	1376		
Norton v. Coons	491, 495		
v. Frecker	503, 628, 989,		
	1521 a		
v. Mascall	1458		
v. Steinkopf	1280		
v. Turvill	1398, 1401		
v. Webb	1016		
v. Woods	895, 895 a		
Norway v. Rowe	673, 837, 928, 929		
		O.	
		Oakes v. Turquand	440 b
		Oakley v. Pound	1401 b
		Oates v. Cooke	1067 b
		Obert v. Obert	1520
		Ocean Ins. Co. v. Fields	887
		O'Copner v. Cook	1464
		v. Spaight	447, 451, 457,
			459, 508, 1436
		O'Dell v. Crone	1065 b, 1065 c
		Oder v. Gard	134 a
		Odineal v. Barry	294
		Offley v. Offley	1375
		Ogden v. Fossick	778 b
		v. Gibbons	927
		Ogilvie v. Foljambe	161, 770
		v. Jeaffreson	399, 408
		Ogle v. Cook	1447
		O'Gorman v. Comyn	1216 a
		O'Hara v. O'Neil	1201
		O'Herlihy v. Hedges	760
		Oke v. Heath	1388
		Okeden v. Okeden	1064
		Okeefe v. Casey	1339
		Okill v. Whittaker	141, 144, 152
		Oldham v. Carleton	1208
		v. Hand	12, 313
		v. James	778 c
		v. Lichford	768, 780
		v. Litchfield	256
		v. Oldham	1521 a
		Oliphant v. Hendrie	1184, 1185
		Olive v. Smith	1435
		Oliver v. Court	323, 1275, 1284
		v. Hamilton	672
		v. Kinney	371
		v. Pratt	1210, 1258

Olmstead <i>v.</i> Loomis	927		
O'Mahoney <i>v.</i> Dickson	459		
Omerod <i>v.</i> Hardman	770, 776		
Omnany <i>v.</i> Butcher	979 <i>a</i> , 1068 <i>a</i> , 1070, 1157, 1164, 1182, 1183, 1190, 1196 <i>a</i>		
O'Neil <i>v.</i> Teague	152		
Onge <i>v.</i> Truelock	493		
Onions <i>v.</i> Cohen	694 <i>a</i>		
	<i>v.</i> Tyrer	99	
Onslow <i>v.</i> O'Hara	913		
	<i>v.</i> Mitchell	1109, 1110	
Onyou <i>v.</i> Washbourne	891		
Openheim <i>v.</i> De Wolf	807		
Orby <i>v.</i> Trigg	1019		
Ord <i>v.</i> Noel	1259		
O'Reilly <i>v.</i> Thompson	763, 765, 766		
Orford, Earl of, <i>v.</i> Churchill	1065 <i>b</i>		
Oriental In. Steam B. Co. <i>v.</i> Stewart	793 <i>g</i>		
Ormes <i>v.</i> Beadel	345 <i>a</i> , 694 <i>a</i>		
Ormond <i>v.</i> Hutchinson	134, 218, 322, 462		
	<i>v.</i> Marquis of, <i>v.</i> Kinersley	514	
Orr <i>v.</i> Kaines	90, 92		
Orrok <i>v.</i> Binney	841		
Orwell <i>v.</i> Profert	1411		
Osbaldiston <i>v.</i> Askew	1449 <i>a</i>		
	<i>v.</i> Simpson	303	
Osborn <i>v.</i> Bank of U. S.	906, 907, 927		
	<i>v.</i> Bellman	1074 <i>d</i>	
	<i>v.</i> Carr	419	
	<i>v.</i> Morgan	1413	
	<i>v.</i> Osborn	1658 <i>a</i>	
	<i>v.</i> Phelps	161	
Osborne <i>v.</i> Osborne	919		
	<i>v.</i> Williams	294, 298, 300	
Osbreyc <i>v.</i> Bury	996		
Osgood <i>v.</i> Franklin	244, 246, 794 <i>a</i>		
	<i>v.</i> Strobe	986, 987	
Osmond <i>v.</i> Fitzroy	35, 260, 308, 337		
Otter <i>v.</i> Lord Vaux	1227		
Ottley <i>v.</i> Brown	296		
Otway <i>v.</i> Hudson	790		
Outram <i>v.</i> Round	733		
Overend, Gurney & Co.	724 <i>b</i>		
Owen <i>v.</i> Cawley	1401 <i>f</i> , 1401 <i>i</i>		
	<i>v.</i> Davies	760	
	<i>v.</i> Griffith	510	
	<i>v.</i> Homan	324, 383	
Owens <i>v.</i> Bean	1170		
	<i>v.</i> Dickenson	548, 1062 <i>a</i> , 1394, 1397, 1399, 1400, 1401	
Owens <i>v.</i> Baldwin	764		
Oxenden <i>v.</i> Lord Compton	790, 1335, 1336, 1357, 1362, 1363, 1364		
	<i>v.</i> Oxenden	1424, 1425	
Oxenham <i>v.</i> Esdaile	1216 <i>a</i> , 1217		
Oxford, Earl of, <i>v.</i> Tyrrell	44		
			P.
			Packer <i>v.</i> Wyndham
			1410, 1415
			Packet (The Ship)
			1241
			Packham <i>v.</i> Gregory
			604 <i>a</i>
			Paddock <i>v.</i> Palmer
			252 <i>b</i> , 876 <i>a</i> , 1572
			<i>v.</i> Strobridge
			212 <i>a</i>
			Padwick <i>v.</i> Hurst
			459
			Page <i>v.</i> Broom
			771, 775, 1036 <i>b</i> , 1196
			<i>v.</i> Horne
			987 <i>a</i>
			<i>v.</i> Page
			1208
			Paget <i>v.</i> Gee
			481, 482
			Paice <i>v.</i> Archbishop of Canterbury
			1190
			Pain <i>v.</i> Coombs
			738 <i>a</i> , 761, 763 <i>a</i>
			<i>v.</i> Smith
			1020, 1026
			Paine <i>v.</i> Hutchinson
			724 <i>b</i>
			<i>v.</i> Wagner
			1055 <i>e</i>
			Painter <i>v.</i> Henderson
			322
			Pale <i>v.</i> Mitchell
			1402
			Palen <i>v.</i> Hills
			1065 <i>b</i>
			Palmer <i>v.</i> Bate
			295, 1040 <i>d</i>
			<i>v.</i> Mason
			603
			<i>v.</i> Mitchell
			1277 <i>a</i>
			<i>v.</i> Neave
			270
			<i>v.</i> Stebbins
			292
			<i>v.</i> Walker
			550
			<i>v.</i> Wheeler
			255
			<i>v.</i> Wettenhal
			684, 684 <i>c</i> , 685, 741
			Palmer's case
			459 <i>f</i>
			Pamplin <i>v.</i> Green
			542
			Panton <i>v.</i> Panton
			468, 623
			Papillon <i>v.</i> Papillon
			1109
			<i>v.</i> Voice
			703, 983
			Paradine <i>v.</i> Jane
			101, 470, 1307
			Paramour <i>v.</i> Yardley
			591
			Pardo <i>v.</i> Bingham
			554 <i>a</i>
			Parham <i>v.</i> McCrary
			1521 <i>a</i>
			Paris <i>v.</i> Gilham
			808, 811, 813 <i>b</i>
			<i>v.</i> Hulet
			499 <i>e</i>
			Parish <i>v.</i> Stone
			606 <i>a</i> , 607 <i>c</i>
			Park <i>v.</i> Johnson
			749 <i>a</i> , 749 <i>b</i> , 749 <i>c</i> , 771
			Parker <i>v.</i> Blythmore
			410, 631
			<i>v.</i> Branker
			1032
			<i>v.</i> Brooke
			400, 400 <i>a</i> , 1380
			<i>v.</i> Browning
			833 <i>a</i> , 833 <i>b</i> , 891
			<i>v.</i> Clarke
			1067 <i>b</i>
			<i>v.</i> Dee
			65, 69, 455
			<i>v.</i> Gerard
			650, 653
			<i>v.</i> Grant
			206
			<i>v.</i> Harvey
			1376
			<i>v.</i> Housefield
			1026
			<i>v.</i> Marchant
			1246, 1247 <i>a</i>
			<i>v.</i> Marston
			606
			<i>v.</i> Nightingale
			956
			<i>v.</i> Pistor
			678
			<i>v.</i> Taswell
			737 <i>a</i>
			<i>v.</i> The Dunn Navigation Company
			959, 1559

Parker v. Watkins	1227	Peacock v. Monk	1380, 1388, 1389, 1391, 1392, 1399, 1401
Parkes v. White	1390, 1392, 1395, 1396	v. Peacock	666, 672
Parkin v. Thorold	776	v. Stockford	1196 b
Parkist v. Alexander	315, 402, 403, 419	Peake, <i>ex parte</i>	1226, 1228
v. Lowten	1496	v. Highfield	700, 701
v. Van Cortlandt	160, 761, 762, 764, 766, 767, 795, 798	Pearce v. Chamberlin	673
Parks v. Evansville Railw.	1539 a	v. Creswick	64 k, 70, 74 c, 74 d, 74 e, 81, 82, 455, 691
v. Jackson	824	v. Crutchfield	1360
Parmentier v. Gillespie	1023 d	v. Green	462, 464
Parr v. Eliason	434	v. Morris	1035 f
v. Howlin	459 g	v. Pearce	1280
Parrott v. Congreve	954	Pearl v. Deacon	498 b
Parslow v. Weaden	375	v. McDonald	229 b
Parsons v. Baker	1068	Pearley v. Smith	480
v. Bignold	154	Pearne v. Lisle	709
v. Bradford	57	Pearpont v. Graham	1036
v. Bridlock	499 b	Pearse v. Green	462, 1275
v. Parsons	180	Pearson v. Cardon	806, 811, 817, 817 a, 818, 820
v. Rudduck	638	v. Lord	140
v. Thompson	295	v. Morgan	193, 207, 387, 390
v. Winslow	287, 291 b	v. Pearson	1088
Parteriche v. Powlet	158, 767, 1206	v. Rutter	1074 c
Partridge v. Gopp	353, 354, 362, 368	v. Ward	1514
v. Manc	951	Pease v. Pease	1270
v. Menck	951 a	Peat v. Crane	1260, 1273
v. Smith	706 c	Pechell v. Watson	1048 a
v. Walker	1153	Peck v. Ashley	1483
Paschat v. Ketterich	540, 552, 602	v. Crane	891
Pasmore v. Huggins	1074 b	v. Elder	926
Patch v. Ward	252 a, 1493 c	Pedder's settlement, <i>in re</i>	793 a
Paten v. Rogers	779	Peers v. Baldwin	1316 a
Patmore v. Morris	113	Peiffer v. Lythe	1201 d
Patrick v. Harrison	906	Peirce v. Webb	700
Patten v. The Agricultural Bank	1233 a	Peirsoll v. Elliot	698, 700, 700 a
Patterson v. McCamant	859	Pelletrave v. Jackson	1035 b
Pattison v. Hull	459 c, 459 d, 1047	Pells v. Brown	1067 a
Patton v. Schooner Randolph	1242	Pember v. Mathews	161, 768, 850, 1528
Patty v. Pease	506, 634, 1233 a	Pemberton v. Oakes	459 a, 459 c
Paul v. Compton	1068 a	v. Peuberton	184, 1445, 1447
Pawlet v. Deval	1373, 1380	Pembroke v. Thorpe	725, 753, 762
v. Ingres	855	Pendarvis v. Hicks	287
Pawlett v. Attorney General	1014, 1015	Pendergast v. Turton	1537
Paxton v. Douglas	547, 549, 550, 890	Pendleton v. Rooth	1521 b
Payne v. Crompton	64 c, 630, 631, 1502	v. Wamersic	459
<i>ex parte</i>	1069, 1073	Pengal v. Ross	760, 761, 765
v. Little	1275 a	Penn v. Haywood	744 a
v. Miller	776	v. Lord Baltimore	623, 729, 743, 744, 785, 899, 959, 1291
v. Mortimer	432 a	Pennington v. Gittings	607 a, 607 c
Payton v. Bladwell	266, 267	Pennsylvania Co. v. Delaware Co.	747
Peabody v. Flint	1252 o	Penny v. Clarke	604 a
v. Norfolk	951 f	v. Martin	105, 146
v. Tarlell	1201	v. Watts	399
Peachy v. Duke of Somerset	1315, 1316, 1326		
Peacock v. Evans	64 e, 246, 335 to 338, 346		

Penrhyn v. Hughes	487, 488 a	Philbrook v. Delano	1224
Pentland v. Stokes	402	Phillips v. Berger	718, 722
People v. Moores	240	v. Bordman	956
Percival (Lord) v. Phipps	944, 946, 949	v. Carew	1513
Perfect v. Lane	337 b	v. Chamberlain	180, 1394
Perin v. Cary	1194 c	v. Duke of Bucks	195
Perkins v. Hart	523, 525	<i>ex parte</i> 1329, 1334, 1335, 1357,	1363
v. Kenshaw	499 b	v. Hunter	1576
v. Lyman	292	v. Markbery	274, 291 b
Perrin v. Lyon	291 d	v. Parker	558, 571
Perrott v. Perrott	913	v. Phillips 459 a, 462 a, 1209,	1269
Perry v. Barker	1025	v. Thompson	762, 764, 766, 795, 798
v. Phelps	546, 547, 549	v. Worth	891
v. Phelps	890	Phillipson v. Kerry	706 b
v. Phillips	1210	Phippen v. Stickney	292
v. Shipway	959 e, 1284 b	Phipps v. Annesley	603
v. Truefit	951	Phoenix v. Clark	914
Perry-Herrick v. Attwood	390 a	Phoenix Bank v. Sullivan	1036 a
Persse v. Persse	132	Piatt v. McCullough	166, 174
Petch v. Tutin	1040	v. Vattier	529, 975, 976, 1520
Peter v. Beverly	1059, 1060	Picard v. Hines	1401 h
v. Rich	493, 496	Pickard, <i>ex parte</i>	1364, 1395
v. Russell	393	v. Roberts	1396, 1413
Peters v. Anderson	459 d	v. Sears	375, 1539
v. Grote	1424	Pickens v. Finney	326
v. Lord	240	Pickering v. Dawson	160, 201
v. Mortimer	301	v. Lord Stamford 64 a, 1091	
v. Rule	72	v. Pickering	117, 121, 131, 137
v. Soame	1434, 1436	Picket v. Loggon	239, 251
Peterson v. Peterson	589 c	Pickstock v. Lyster	370, 1036, 1036 a
Petit v. Shepherd	694, 700	Pidcock v. Bishop	148, 214, 215, 324, 383
v. Smith 64 f, 542, 596, 1180,	1180 a	Pidding v. How	951 a
Peto v. Br. U. & Tunbridge Wells		Piddock v. Brown	523
Railway Co.	778 b	Pierce v. Brown	1016
Petre v. Bruen	556	v. Franks	951 a
v. Espinasse	371, 425, 973	v. Fuller	292
v. Petre	707, 1355	v. Lamson	705 a
Petrie v. Clark	1128	v. Thornely	1403, 1406, 1411, 1412
Pettes v. Bank of Whitehall	1574	v. Waring	318
Pettinger v. Pettinger	231	v. Webb	689, 700
Petty v. Styward	1206	Piercy v. Roberts	974 a
Peyroux v. Howard	1241	Pierpont v. Lord	1036
Peyter v. White	793 k	Piers v. Baldwin	1316 a
Peyton v. Bury	257, 291	Pierson v. Garnet 105 a, 1068 a, 1071	
v. Green	1528	v. Hutchinson	82
v. Rawlins	231	v. Shore	1357
v. Stith	1520	v. Woodward	292
Peyton's case	1080	Piffard v. Beeby	1493 c
Phalen v. Clark	300, 1521	Piggott v. Thompson	1041
Phayre v. Perce	1260	v. Baygey	1098
Phelps v. Amcotts	432 b	v. Green	1065 b
v. Decker	298	v. Stratton	956
v. Green	650, 654	v. Williams	1436
Philadelphia Baptist Association v. Smith	1136, 1191		
Philanthropic Society v. Kemp	1180, 1180 a, 1208		

<i>Fike v. Hoare</i>	623, 744	<i>Porter v. Bank of Rutland</i>	408 a, 1380
<i>v. Nicholas</i>	941 a	<i>v. Bradley</i>	1067 a
<i>Pilgrim v. Auction Mart Co.</i>	929 c	<i>v. Read</i>	1023
<i>Piling v. Armitage</i>	208, 388, 1528	<i>v. Spencer</i>	457, 464, 1470, 1473, 1474
<i>Finch v. Anthony</i>	1231 a	<i>v. Turner</i>	95
<i>Fincke v. Curteis</i>	776, 1521	<i>Porter's Trust, in re</i>	604 a
<i>v. Thornycroft</i>	1520	<i>Portlock v. Gardner</i>	1520
<i>Finder v. Pinder</i>	604 a	<i>Portman v. Mill</i>	778
<i>Fingry v. Coffin</i>	793 r	<i>v. Morris</i>	113, 154
<i>v. Washburn</i>	293 b	<i>Portmore, Earl of, v. Taylor</i>	340
<i>Finkston v. Brown</i>	300	<i>Portsmouth v. Effingham</i>	1504
<i>Pinney v. Fellows</i>	1201	<i>v. Fellows</i>	1289
<i>Pitcairne v. Ogbourne</i>	153, 154, 158, 161, 267, 272	<i>Post v. Kimberley</i>	80, 451, 457, 458, 464
<i>Pitcher v. Rigby</i>	312	<i>Postley v. Cain</i>	652
<i>Fitt v. Cholmondeley</i>	523, 525, 527	<i>Postmaster General v. Furber</i>	459 a, 459 b, 459 g
<i>v. Hunt</i>	1410	<i>Pothonier v. Dawson</i>	1033
<i>Pitt's Will, in re</i>	183	<i>Potter v. Chapin</i>	1154 d
<i>Place v. Sweetzer</i>	677	<i>v. Chapman</i>	996
<i>Platt v. Platt</i>	1111	<i>v. Sanders</i>	784
<i>Platto v. Denster</i>	876 a	<i>v. Thornton</i>	1494 f
<i>Pledge v. Buss</i>	325 a, 498 a, 499	<i>v. Tuttle</i>	776
<i>Plowman v. Riddle</i>	1226	<i>Potts v. Larr</i>	337 d
<i>Plum v. Fluitt</i>	390, 391, 393, 395, 399, 400 a, 1020	<i>Powell v. Cleaver</i>	1117
<i>Plunkett v. Brereton</i>	684	<i>v. Evans</i>	1269, 1271, 1274
<i>v. Penson</i>	553, 557	<i>v. Hankey</i>	1396
<i>v. The Meth. Epis. Soc.</i>		<i>v. Hollicar</i>	607 a
<i>in North Adams</i>	750	<i>in re</i>	1074 d
<i>Plymouth, Countess of, v. Throg-</i>		<i>v. Knowler</i>	1049
<i>morton</i>	471	<i>v. Monson</i>	626, 632
<i>Pocock v. Reddington</i>	1263	<i>v. Monson and Brimfield</i>	
<i>Podham v. Bampfield</i>	61, 288, 1315, 1319, 1320	<i>Man. Co.</i>	1201, 1257
<i>v. Lancaster</i>	856	<i>v. Mouchet</i>	181
<i>Podmore v. Gunning</i>	768, 1068 a, 1069, 1073	<i>v. Powell</i>	107
<i>Poillon v. Martin</i>	321	<i>v. Powis</i>	856
<i>Pole v. Pole</i>	1203	<i>v. Price</i>	165
<i>Pollenfex v. Moore</i>	563, 564 a, 565, 789, 1220, 1227, 1248	<i>v. Robins</i>	1247
<i>Pomeroy v. Partington</i>	1062 a	<i>v. Stewart</i>	895
<i>Pomret v. Pening</i>	174 a	<i>v. White</i>	499 b
<i>v. Windsor</i>	419, 436, 529	<i>Powell's Executors v. White</i>	493, 499 d
<i>Pool v. Gott</i>	1341	<i>Power v. Bailey</i>	784, 1231, 1401
<i>Pooley v. Budd</i>	718, 724	<i>v. Knowler</i>	294
<i>v. Ray</i>	91, 140	<i>Powers v. Hale</i>	769
<i>Poor of St. Dunstan v. Beauchamp</i>	718, 724	<i>v. Mayo</i>	793 t
<i>Poore v. Clark</i>	855	<i>Powerscourt v. Powerscourt</i>	1164
<i>Pope v. Curl</i>	943, 944	<i>Powis v. Corbet</i>	418
<i>v. Crashaw</i>	1412	<i>Powys v. Blagrane</i>	913
<i>v. Garland</i>	770	<i>v. Mansfield</i>	1101, 1111, 1116, 1118
<i>v. Gwinn</i>	553	<i>Prand v. Sympson</i>	521 b
<i>v. Onslow</i>	1023	<i>Pratt v. Brent</i>	913
<i>v. Pope</i>	1065 b, 1070	<i>v. Bryant</i>	623
<i>v. Whitcomb</i>	1065 b, 1065 f	<i>v. Carroll</i>	771
<i>Portarlington v. Soulby</i>	303, 743, 899, 900	<i>v. James</i>	1289 c
		<i>v. Law</i>	776, 794 a, 795, 796, 798
		<i>v. Sladden</i>	1208
		<i>v. Taliaferro</i>	790

Raikes v. Ward	1289 a	Reach v. Kennigate	256
Railton v. Matthews	215, 327 a	Reade v. Bentley	941 b
Rakestraw v. Brewer	1016	v. Conquest	941 a
Ram v. Hughes	770	v. Livingston	355, 356, 359 to 361, 363, 374
Ramboll v. Soojumnull	294	v. Lowndes	502 b
Ramsbottom v. Golden	155, 156, 161	Redding v. Wilkes	374, 762, 768
v. Gosden	770 a	Rede v. Farr	1323
v. Parker	239, 331	Redfearn v. Ferrier	421, 422 c
Ramsden v. Hylton	120, 122, 124, 130, 134, 145, 372, 374	Redfern v. Smith	917
v. O'Keefe	1575 a	Redheimer v. Pyson	1134
Ramsey v. Bell	650	Redington v. Redington	486, 488
v. Joyce	273	Redman v. Redman	266, 269, 387
v. Trent	1048 a	Reech v. Kennigate	781
Rancliffe v. Parkyns	1080, 1085, 1089	Reed v. Brokman	81
Rand v. Redington	1452	v. Bank of Newburgh	694, 700
Randall v. Bookey	1208	v. Don Pedro, &c., Co.	793 k
v. Morgan	374, 987 a	v. Norris	316, 493, 499, 499 b, 1211 a
v. Phillips	371, 1206	v. Reed	1425, 1471, 1472
v. Randall	160, 674	Rees v. Berrington	326, 849, 883
v. Russell	602, 1394	Reese River Silver M. Co. v. At-	
v. Willis	160, 384	well	432 b
Randfield v. Randfield	604 a	Reeve v. Attorney General	1190
Ranelagh v. Hays	639, 730, 794, 849, 850	v. Hicks	1028 b
Ranelagh, Lord, v. Melton	777 a	v. Parkins	907
Ranken v. Harwood	550	Reeves v. Reeves	703, 704
Rankin v. Huskisson	927	Refeld v. Woodfolk	850 a
v. Leg	793 i	Reformed M. Society v. Draper	893 a
v. Wagnelin	607 a	Regent's Canal Co. v. Ware	769 a
Ransom v. Keyes	498	Regina v. Lord	240
Ransome v. Burgess	997 a	v. Smith	1341
Raphael v. Boehm	465, 1277	Rehden v. Wesley	1270 a
v. Thames Valley Railw. Co.	736 c, 778 g	Reichart v. Castelor	371
Rashleigh v. Master	480, 790	Reid v. Gifford	927
Rastel v. Hutchinson	1201 a	v. Shergold	172, 1393
Ratcliff v. Davies	1030	v. Stearn	820 a
Ratcliffe v. Graves	1278	Reiley v. Mayer	564 c
Rathbone v. Warren	33, 71, 426, 451, 457	Reimers v. Druce	1520 a
Rathbun v. Rathbun	759	Remnant v. Hood	604 a
Ravald v. Russell	1028 b	Rensen v. Remsen	1528
Raw v. Potts	64, 387	Rendell v. Carpenter	1531 a
Rawbone's Bequest	400 a	Rennet v. Young	1535
Rawdon v. Shadwell	298, 302, 303, 1494	Rennie v. Irvine	292
Rawlins v. Powell	1119, 1122	Revell v. Hussey	693
Rawth v. Marriott	1449 a	Revett v. Harvey	319
Rawson v. Samuel	1434, 1436	Rex v. Arundel	81, 84, 254
Rawstone v. Parr	164	v. Bennett	502
Ray, ex parte	1351, 1383	v. Boston	1201 a
v. Bogart	529	v. Hare	43
v. Ray	579	v. Hare & Mann	59
Raymond v. Sellick	606 a, 607 c	v. Hopkins	1341 a
Rayne v. Baker	1020 a	v. Morely	1341 a
Rayner v. Pearsall	422, 529	v. Standish	44
v. Stone	725, 727	v. Watson	1036
Raynham v. Canton	140	Reynard v. Spence	1097
		Reynish v. Martin	279, 287, 288, 290, 602
		Reynolds v. Nelson	776, 904

Reynolds <i>v.</i> Pitts	1313, 1316, 1321, 1322, 1324	Ridgway <i>v.</i> Darwin	1965
<i>v.</i> Smith	1321	<i>v.</i> Roberts	72, 184
<i>v.</i> Teynham	1340	<i>v.</i> Sneyd	957 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Waller	231	<i>v.</i> Underwood	433
Rhode Island Bank <i>v.</i> Hawkins	925 <i>c</i>	Ridler <i>v.</i> Ridler	225, 226, 229 <i>a</i>
Rhodes <i>v.</i> Bate	229 <i>b</i> , 312 <i>b</i> , 337 <i>d</i>	Ridout <i>v.</i> Earl of Plymouth	1376, 1377
<i>v.</i> Dunbar	959 <i>k</i>	<i>v.</i> Payne	312, 1453, 1455
Ricardi <i>v.</i> Garcias	1578	Rigden <i>v.</i> Vallier	1206
Ricards, <i>ex parte</i>	1338	Riggs <i>v.</i> Shurley	1049
<i>v.</i> Salter	806, 808	Riker <i>v.</i> Darke	653
<i>v.</i> Symmes	705 <i>a</i> , 706, 793 <i>a</i> , 895	Ring <i>v.</i> Bemis	316
Rice <i>v.</i> Barnard	674	Ripley <i>v.</i> Waterworth	674, 1065 <i>b</i> , 1200, 1207
<i>v.</i> Dewey	1553 <i>b</i>	Ripon, Earl of, <i>v.</i> Hobart	921, 923, 924 <i>a</i> , 925, 959 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Hale	1469, 1473	Rippon <i>v.</i> Dawding	784, 1370, 1371, 1390
<i>v.</i> Tonneli	1354 <i>a</i>	Rippy <i>v.</i> Grant	238
Rich <i>v.</i> Aldred	803	Rishton <i>v.</i> Cobb	280
<i>v.</i> Cockell	1085, 1372, 1380, 1381, 1392	Ritchie <i>v.</i> Smith	294
<i>v.</i> Jackson	153, 160, 161, 767, 770	Ritson <i>v.</i> Brumlow	483
<i>v.</i> Jones	1018 <i>b</i>	Rives <i>v.</i> Dudley	1542
<i>v.</i> Sydenham	231	<i>v.</i> Rives	487
Richard <i>v.</i> Holmes	1027	Rivett's case	1152, 1170, 1171
Richards, <i>ex parte</i>	1338	Roach <i>v.</i> Garvan	1339, 1341, 1355, 1360
<i>v.</i> Baker	285	<i>v.</i> Haynes	1392
<i>v.</i> Chambers	1394, 1396, 1413	Robbins <i>v.</i> Fitz	1037 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Davies	671	Roberdeau <i>v.</i> Rous	744, 959, 1299
<i>v.</i> Humphreys	1116	Roberts <i>v.</i> Bell	817
<i>v.</i> Lewis	433	<i>v.</i> Croft	1020 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Salter	806, 808	<i>v.</i> Dixwell	974
<i>v.</i> Symes	507 <i>a</i> , 706, 793 <i>a</i> , 895	<i>v.</i> Eberhardt	672 <i>a</i>
Richardson <i>v.</i> Baltimore	875	<i>v.</i> Kuffin	524
<i>v.</i> Bank of England	667	<i>v.</i> Roberts	263, 266, 298, 306, 955, 1414
<i>v.</i> Bligh	144	<i>v.</i> Smith	1088 <i>d</i>
<i>v.</i> Campbell	1241	<i>v.</i> Spicer	1383
<i>v.</i> Chapman	1061	<i>v.</i> Standish	236, 323
<i>v.</i> Elphinstone	1106	<i>v.</i> Weatherford	1111
<i>v.</i> Greese	1122	Robertson <i>v.</i> Armstrong	1277 <i>f</i>
<i>v.</i> Horton	162, 163, 164	<i>v.</i> Norris	514 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Linney	317	Robeson <i>v.</i> Harwell	161
<i>v.</i> Nourse	1455	<i>v.</i> Pittenger	926
<i>v.</i> Smallwood	356, 359 to 361	Robinson <i>v.</i> Alexander	1520
Richets, <i>ex parte</i>	1040 <i>f</i>	<i>v.</i> Bland	303
Richmond <i>v.</i> Aiken	1028	<i>v.</i> Byron	927
<i>v.</i> City of London	684	<i>v.</i> Campbell	57
<i>v.</i> Gray	777 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Cathcart	352, 362
Ricker <i>v.</i> Ham	428	<i>v.</i> Comyns	996
Ricketts <i>v.</i> Turquand	1447	<i>v.</i> Cumming	1528
Rickman <i>v.</i> Morgan	1105, 1106	<i>v.</i> Davidson	412
Rico <i>v.</i> Gaultier	1474	<i>v.</i> Fife	1028
Riddle <i>v.</i> Mandeville	1057 <i>a</i> , 1250, 1251	<i>v.</i> Gee	296
Rider <i>v.</i> Kidder	298, 299, 367, 1201, 1204	<i>v.</i> Gilbraith	74
<i>v.</i> Powell	138 <i>k</i>	<i>v.</i> Hook	303, 529
<i>v.</i> Wager	1114, 1414	<i>v.</i> Kettletas	722
Ridges <i>v.</i> Morrison	1180	<i>v.</i> Lowwater	1064 <i>c</i>
		<i>v.</i> Litton	913, 914, 1017
		<i>v.</i> M'Donnel	1055

Robinson v. Ridley	1237	Row v. Dawson	1041, 1044, 1047
v. Robinson	1269-1494	Rowbotham v. Wilson	927 a, 956
v. Taylor	1200	Rowe v. Jackson	1417
v. Tonge	1216 a, 1216 c	v. Teed	757
v. Wall	293	v. Wood	837
v. Wheelwright	1084 b	v. —	1514
v. Wilson	499, 499 b, 499 d, 502, 638	Rowland v. Gorsuch	1065 b
Robson v. Collins	770	Rowstone v. Bentley	1326 a
v. Whittingham		Rowth v. Howell	1269
Roby v. Rideholgh	1269	Roy v. Duke of Beaufort	239
Roche v. O'Brien	345	Royal v. Garter	44
Rochfort v. Earl of Ely	1335	Royle v. Wynne	889
Rockwell v. Hobby	1020	Rudge v. Hopkins	855
Rodby v. Williams	217	Ruffin, <i>ex parte</i>	675, 676, 1253
Rodgers v. Nowell	951 a	Ruffner v. McConnel	157
Rodney v. Chambers	1428	Ruhling v. Hackett	138 b
Roe v. Mitton	987	Rumbold v. Rumbold	499, 559
Rogers v. Atkinson	160	Rumph v. Abercrombie	694
v. Dallimore	1456	Runyan v. Carter	1562
v. Jones	199	Rush v. Higgs	544, 545, 546, 547
v. Leele	410	Rushworth, <i>ex parte</i>	234, 499 b, 499 d, 502, 638
v. Mackenzie	493, 496, 505	Russell v. Ashby	1470, 1473
v. McClure	499 b	v. Bodvil	1424
v. Rathburn	301	v. Clarke's Executors	71, 74, 74 c, 184, 455, 1250, 1257
v. Rogers	907, 955	v. Darwin	722
r. Searle	631	v. Hammond	355, 356, 363, 372
v. Skillicome	1132	v. Jackson	1496
v. Traders' Ins. Co.	1040 c	v. Russell	1020, 1026
v. Vosburgh	889	v. Smythies	790
v. Walker	1365	v. Southard	1018
v. Ward	1401 d	v. Woodward	1036 a
Rohan v. Hanson	459 a	Rutherford v. Ruff	231
Rolfe v. Gregory	1261 c	Rutland, Duke of, v. Duchess of Rutland	532
v. Rolfe	758 a, 958	Ryall v. Rolle	1005, 1006, 1030, 1047, 1056, 1259
Rolle v. Budder	1380	v. Rowles	1047, 1056, 1436
v. Harris	1323, 1324, 1326 a	v. Ryall	1201, 1202, 1210
Rolt v. Hopkinson	1023 a, 1023 d	Ryan v. Mackmath	684 c, 698, 700, 700 a
Rondeau v. Wyatt	753, 755, 757	Ryder v. Bentham	927
Rook v. Worth	725, 1357	v. Bickerton	1274
Roome v. Roome	1111, 1117	v. The Alton and Sangam- mon R. R. Co.	959
Roosevelt v. Fulton	244	Ryland v. Smith	987 a
v. Thurman	1455	Ryle v. Haggie	67, 69, 70, 455, 691
Roper v. Radcliffe	793	v. Rown	336
v. Williams	927	Ryves v. Duke of Wellington	184
Roscarick v. Barton	1014		
Rose v. Clarke	1057 a		
v. Cunningham	790	S.	
v. Hart	1435		
v. Rose	1315	Saberton v. Skeels	1065 b
Rosewell v. Bennett	1117	Sabliech v. Russell	824 a
Rotheram v. Fanshaw	898	Sackville v. Ayleworth	1490, 1511
Rothwell v. Dewees	1201 c	Sadler v. Hobbs	1281, 1284
v. Rothwell	841		
Roundell v. Breary	1231, 1231 a		
Rous v. Noble	603		
Rouse v. Barker	619		
Routh v. Webster	950		
Rove v. Jackson	1417		

Sadler & Jackson, <i>ex parte</i>	379	Sawyer v. Shute	1409
<i>v. Lee</i>	673 <i>a</i>	Saxton v. Haines	1293 <i>a</i>
Sagitary v. Hyde	353, 362, 499, 562	Say v. Barwick	231, 345
Sainsbury v. Jones	796	Sayer v. Bennett	673
Saint Dunstan, Parish of, <i>v.</i>		<i>v. Pierce</i>	69, 512, 516
Beauchamp	1147, 1161	Sayre v. Fredericks	372 <i>b</i>
Saint Jago de Cuba, The	1241	Scales v. Maude	973
Saint John v. Benedict	742	Scarborough v. Borman	1384
<i>v. Ilford</i>	1034	<i>v. Lord Hilton</i>	858
<i>v. Saint John</i>	695, 697,	Scarf v. Soulby	356, 359, 361
	700, 1427, 1428	Scawin v. Scawin	1202, 1204
Saint Paul's v. Dudley and Ward	1035 <i>b</i>	Schafurnan v. O'Brien	272 <i>b</i>
Sainter v. Ferguson	292	Schalk v. Schmidt	891 <i>b</i>
Sale v. Dishman	112	Schenk v. Ellingwood	95
<i>v. Moor</i>	1072, 1073, 1669	Schnetzel's Appeal	499 <i>e</i>
Salmon v. Bennet	363	Scholefield v. Templer	167, 193 <i>a</i> , 326
Salomans v. Laing	959	Scholle v. Sall	889
Saloway v. Strawbridge	1027	Schroepell v. Shaw	326
Salter, <i>ex parte</i>	1338, 1354	Schroepel v. Hopper	747
<i>v. Bradshaw</i>	337 <i>a</i>	Schroepel v. Shaw	146, 501
Saltonstall v. Sanders	1494 <i>f</i>	Schryner v. Teller	634
Saltun v. Melhuish	254	Schultz v. Carter	499 <i>d</i>
Sample v. Barnes	894, 1582	Schumpert v. Rich	1341 <i>a</i>
Sampson v. Smith	924, 924 <i>a</i>	Schutt v. Large	403
Samuda v. Lawford	749 <i>c</i>	Scofield v. Van Bokkelm	929
Samuel v. Howarth	883	Scott v. Beecher	1248 <i>a</i>
Sanborn v. Kittridge	71	<i>v. Beeker</i>	574
Sandby, <i>ex parte</i>	472	<i>v. Colburn</i>	1565
Sanders v. Frank	1394	<i>v. Corporation of Liverpool</i>	459 <i>a</i> , 1457 <i>a</i> , 1548
<i>v. Pope</i>	1314, 1315, 1320,	<i>v. Curle</i>	1182
	1326 <i>a</i>	<i>v. Davis</i>	321
Sanderson v. Bayley	1065 <i>c</i>	<i>v. Fenhoulett</i>	1001, 1201
<i>v. C. & W. Railway</i>		<i>v. Hanson</i>	199
Co.	959 <i>f</i>	<i>v. Jones</i>	1521 <i>a</i>
Sanderson's Trust, <i>in re</i>	1064 <i>a</i>	<i>v. Lord Hastings</i>	1035 <i>a</i>
Sandford v. Remington	1496	<i>v. Nesbit</i>	301, 422, 1236
Sandiland, <i>ex parte</i>	1428 <i>a</i>	<i>v. Porcher</i>	1041, 1045, 1046
Sandon v. Hooper	1016 <i>b</i>	<i>v. Scott</i>	269 to 272, 387, 565
Sands v. Hildreth	345	<i>v. Spashett</i>	1410, 1421 <i>a</i>
Sanquirico v. Benedetti	958	<i>v. Surman</i>	463, 1038, 1229, 1258
Sarchett v. The Sloop Davis	1241	<i>v. Tyler</i>	278 to 280, 283 to 285,
Sargent v. Parsons	445		289, 290, 422, 580
Sarten v. Golden	709	Scottish N. E. Railw. Co. v. Stew-	
Satterlee v. Frazier	1049	<i>art</i>	793 <i>f</i>
Saunders v. Cornford	808	Scribner v. Hickok	483
<i>v. Dehaw</i>	395, 977	Scriven v. Tapley	1417
<i>v. Leslie</i>	1225, 1726	Scurfield v. Howes	604 <i>a</i> , 1281, 1283
<i>v. Lord Annesley</i>	138 <i>c</i>	Seagood v. Meale	760, 765
<i>v. Smith</i>	940, 959 <i>a</i>	Seagram v. Knight	518 <i>b</i>
Savage v. Brocksopp	693, 776, 1528	Sea Insur. Co. v. Stebbins	833
<i>v. Carroll</i>	763, 764, 1210	Seaman v. Van Renssalaer	742
<i>v. Foster</i>	385, 387, 761, 1080 <i>a</i>	Sear v. Ashwell	433
Savery v. King	310	Searing v. Searing	1403
<i>v. Spence</i>	710	Sears v. Laforce	499 <i>e</i>
Saville v. Saville	486, 488	<i>v. Vincent</i>	1458 <i>a</i>
<i>v. Tankred</i>	709	<i>v. Shafer</i>	309
Savin v. Bowdin	473	<i>v. Smith</i>	1226
Savory v. Dyer	862, 1065 <i>a</i>	Seaver v. Phelps	228
Sawyer v. Hovey	138 <i>f</i>		

Seaving v. Brinckerhoff	1036, 1036 a	Shaw v. Coster	809, 819, 821
Seacombe v. Edwards	1074 c	v. Dwight	876
Secor v. Woodward	898	v. Fisher	724 a
Secret v. McKenna	64 c	v. Jeffrey	257 a
Segee v. Thomas	138 k	v. Mitchell	1408, 1411
Seixo v. Provedendo	951 c	v. Neale	1023 a
Selby v. Jackson	228	v. Picton	459 d
v. Selby	499, 558, 564, 564 a, 565, 633, 1220, 1227	Shearman v. Shearman	1474
Seley v. Rhodes	315	Sheddon v. Goodrich	1096
Selkrig v. Davies	674, 1207	Sheehy v. Mandeville	164
Sellack v. Harris	768	Sheets v. Selden	876 a
Sells v. Hubbell's Adm'rs	504	Sheffield v. Duchess of Bucking- hamshire	1445
Selwood v. Mildmay	180	Shelburne v. Inchiquin	152, 153, 157, 161
Senhouse v. Earl	1503, 1504	Sheldon v. Cox	397, 408
Sergeson v. Sealey	228, 229 a, 448, 1357	v. Dodge	1036
Sessions v. Moseley	606	v. Fortesque Aland	1329, 1335, 1364
Seton v. Slade	89, 776, 790, 793, 1013, 1014, 1019, 1301	Shelley v. Nash	338, 347
Sevier v. Greenaway	1277	v. Westbrooke	1341
Sevin v. Deslaudes	959 e	Shelley's case	1493
Seward v. Jackson	1377 a	Shelton v. Alcox	1458 a
Sewell v. Freeston	894, 897	Shepard v. Brown	442 a
v. Sparrow	1436	v. Merrill	1454
Sexton v. Wheaton	362	v. Sandford	74, 794
Seybourne v. Clifton	1503	Shepherd v. Briggs	1452
Seymour v. Danow	1023 b	v. Gillespie	724 b
v. De Lancy	695, 742, 769	v. McEvers	971, 1037
v. Hazard	1470	v. Shepherd	763
v. Seymour	74, 74 a, 74 c, 543 a	v. Titley	417, 1034
v. Tresilian	1376	v. Towgood	465
v. Van Slyck	459 b	v. Wright	491
Shackell v. Macauley	1494	Shepherd's case	724 b
Shackle v. Baker	292	Shepley v. Rangely	702
Shadforth v. Temple	793	Sheppard v. Iveson	694
Shafer v. Davis	116	v. Kent	546, 548, 557
Shaffer v. Sleade	198	v. Oxenford	672 a
Shafto v. Adams	337 c	v. Wilson	480
Shaftoe v. Shaftoe	1425, 1471, 1472	Sheriff v. Butler	533
Shaftsbury v. Arrowsmith	1483, 1491, 1492	v. Coates	930, 933
Shakel v. Duke of Marlborough	730	Sherman v. Bassett	296
Shallcross v. Findon	1246	v. Sherman	526, 529
Shand v. Aberdeen Canal Co.	870	Sherrard v. Sherrard	480
Shank, <i>ex parte</i>	1216	Sherwood v. Salmon	199
Shankland's Appeal	793 r	v. Sanderson	1329, 1335, 1364, 1365
Shanley v. Baker	1190	v. Sutton	529, 1520
Shannon v. Bradstreet	174, 388	Shettiger v. Hopple	138 k
Sharman v. Bell	1455	Shewell v. Dwaris	293 c
Sharp v. Carter	833	Shewon v. Vanderhorst	1521 a
v. Leach	694 a	Shieffelin v. Stewart	322, 1277, 1279
v. Taylor	298	Shiel v. McNett	1318
Sharpe v. Earl of Scarborough	553	Shindel's Appeal	499 e
v. Foy	1401 g	Shine v. Gough	1237
Shattock v. Shattock	1397, 1401 f	Shinn v. Budd	638 a
Shaver v. Radley	975	Shipbrook, Lord, v. Lord Hinchin- brook	1269, 1281, 1284, 1341, 1360
v. White	677	Shiphard v. Lutwidge	552
Shaw v. Borrer	1064 b, 1127, 1129 to 1131		

Shipley <i>v.</i> Ritter	929	Sisney <i>v.</i> Eli	700
Shirley <i>v.</i> Ferrers	1514	Sitwell <i>v.</i> Bernard	790
<i>v.</i> Martin	261, 345	Sjoerds <i>v.</i> Luscombe	1307
<i>v.</i> Shankey	294	Skapholme <i>v.</i> Hart	1049
<i>v.</i> Shirley	1380	Skeel <i>v.</i> Spraker	506, 634, 1233 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Stratton	778	Skeeles <i>v.</i> Shearley	398, 1502
Shitz <i>v.</i> Dieffenbach	1020	Skelton <i>v.</i> Cole	374
Schollenberger's Appeal	74 <i>b</i>	Skett <i>v.</i> Whitmore	760, 768
Shorer <i>v.</i> Shorer	790	Skillern's Ex'rs <i>v.</i> May's Ex'rs	694
Short <i>v.</i> Lee	1464	Skinner <i>v.</i> Dayton	1314, 1316, 1318,
Shortridge <i>v.</i> Lampugh	1119		1322
Shottenkirk <i>v.</i> Wheeler		<i>v.</i> Judson	74 <i>c</i>
Shotwell <i>v.</i> Mott	1142	<i>v.</i> Warner	1339
<i>v.</i> Murray	111, 113, 116, 131,	<i>v.</i> White	1318
	137	Skip <i>v.</i> Huey	326
Shrewsbury, Countess of, <i>v.</i> Earl		Skipp <i>v.</i> Harwood	677, 678, 831
of Shrewsbury	1064	Skotlowe <i>v.</i> Williams	1543
<i>v.</i> Hornby	1182	Sky <i>v.</i> Bennett	547
<i>v.</i> Shrewsbury	486, 488, 954	Slack <i>v.</i> Buchanan	1496
Shubrick <i>v.</i> Salmond	1307	Slade <i>v.</i> Van Vechten	322
Shudal <i>v.</i> Jekyll	1111, 1114, 1117	Slanning <i>v.</i> Style	597, 603, 604, 845,
Shuttleworth <i>v.</i> Laywick	418, 1023		1375, 1380, 1387
Sibley <i>v.</i> Perry	1065 <i>b</i>	Slater <i>v.</i> Lawson	1521 <i>b</i>
Sichel <i>v.</i> Mosenthal	666	Slee <i>v.</i> Manhattan Co.	1522 <i>a</i>
Sidmouth <i>v.</i> Sidmouth	1202	Sleech <i>v.</i> Thorington	1408, 1415, 1424
Sidney <i>v.</i> Shelley	983, 1001	Sleech's case	162, 459 <i>f</i> , 676
<i>v.</i> Sidney	1419, 1420	Sleight <i>v.</i> Lawson	1284 <i>b</i> , 1535
Sieveking <i>v.</i> Behrens	806, 813 <i>b</i>	Slim <i>v.</i> Goucher	212 <i>a</i>
Silcox <i>v.</i> Bell	1065 <i>b</i>	Slingsby <i>v.</i> Boulton	807, 821
Silk <i>v.</i> Prime	64 <i>f</i> , 552	<i>v.</i> Grainger	1074 <i>d</i>
Silver <i>v.</i> Bishop of Norwich	833	Sloane <i>v.</i> Cadogan	706 <i>a</i> , 793 <i>a</i> , 793 <i>b</i>
Simeon <i>v.</i> Schenck	982 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Heathfield	69
Simmonds <i>v.</i> Great Eastern Railw.		Slocum <i>v.</i> Marshall	309
	1233 <i>b</i>	Sloman <i>v.</i> Walter	1314
Simmonds <i>v.</i> Lord Kinnaid	74 <i>a</i>	Small <i>v.</i> Currie	327 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Pallas	1036 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Marwood	1036 to 1037
Simmons <i>v.</i> Cornelius	765	<i>v.</i> Steward	191
Simms <i>v.</i> Marryat	935	Smallcombe's case	1539 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Walker	606 <i>a</i>	Smart <i>v.</i> Prujeen	1164, 1184
Simond <i>v.</i> Hilbert	1229	<i>v.</i> Spurrier	1164
Simons <i>v.</i> Horwood	1382	Smedburg <i>v.</i> Mark	1174, 1470
<i>v.</i> State	1540	Smedes <i>v.</i> Marshall	1020
Simpson <i>v.</i> Brown	1273 <i>c</i>	Smith <i>v.</i> Acton	1521 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Chopman	1277 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Alsop	111
<i>v.</i> Fogg	1535, 1579	<i>v.</i> Applegate	293 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Hart	895, 897, 1436, 1573	<i>v.</i> Appleton	893 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Lord Howden	293 <i>a</i> , 293 <i>c</i> ,	<i>v.</i> Ashton	93, 173
	698, 700, 700 <i>a</i> , 894	<i>v.</i> Attersol	972
<i>v.</i> Spence	604 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Aykerill	263
<i>v.</i> Vaughan	153, 158, 162	<i>v.</i> Babcock	193
Sims <i>v.</i> Aughtery	74 <i>c</i>	<i>v.</i> Bangs	959 <i>f</i>
<i>v.</i> Shelton	710	<i>v.</i> Bank of Scotland	148, 192,
<i>v.</i> Sims	555 <i>a</i> , 1115 <i>a</i>		197, 214, 215, 324, 383
<i>v.</i> Urrey	161	<i>v.</i> Bate	1339
Simson <i>v.</i> Cooke	459 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Beaufort, Duke of,	1493 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Ingham	459 <i>a</i> , 459 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> Bell	1073, 1394
Sinclear <i>v.</i> Fraser	1576	<i>v.</i> Bicknell	88
Singleton <i>v.</i> Bolton	951 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Bromley	61, 298, 300, 302,
Sipthorp <i>v.</i> Moxon	705, 706		390

Smith v. Brush	1528	Smith's Will, <i>in re</i>	844
v. Burnham	767	Smithurst v. Edmunds	1021
v. Camelford	1396	Smoot v. Rea	747
v. Campbell	1065 b, 1065 c	Smyth, <i>ex parte</i>	470, 471 a, 475
v. Carlisle	982 a	v. Griffin	700 a
v. Carl	702	Sneed v. Lord Culpepper	560
v. Clarke	201, 293	Snellgrove v. Bailey	607 a
v. Clay	64 a, 529, 974, 1520	Snelling v. Flatman	1476
v. Collyer	918, 929	Snelson v. Corbet	1376
v. Colman	604 a	Snoddy v. Finch	74 c
v. Cook	69, 518, 704	Snook v. Watts	229 a
v. Crandall	747	Snowden v. Noah	951 a
v. Day	421 a	Sober v. Kemp	1333 a
v. Estate of Steele	502 b	Society for propagating the Gospel	
v. Eustis	632	v. Attorney General	1184
v. Evans	141	Society, &c. v. Butler	959 a
v. Everett	1044, 1047	Sockett v. Wray	1390, 1394, 1397
<i>ex parte</i>	475, 481, 482	Solomon v. Laing	1559
v. Fremont	736	v. Vintners' Company	927 a
v. Greeley	153	Soltau v. De Held	924, 924 a, 927, 958
v. Guyon	1130	Somersetshire Coal Canal Co. v.	
v. Hammond	808, 817 a	Harcourt	1536
v. Hayes	883	Somerset v. Cookson	709
v. Haytwell	906	, Duchess of, case of,	1080
v. Hibbard	788	Somerville v. Mackay	667
v. Hubbard	1218	Somes v. Skinner	225
<i>in re</i>	677	South, <i>ex parte</i>	1041, 1044, 1047, 1057
<i>in re</i> Hay	220	South Wales Railway Co. v. Wythes	
v. Johnson	793 r		778 a, 958 a
v. Kane	459 b, 1408, 1411	Southall v. McKean	799 a, 1494
v. Kay	329 a	Southampton, Mayor of, v. Greaves	591
v. Kittridge	607 c	Southby v. Stonehouse	1388
v. Leveaux	442 a, 462 a	Southey v. Sherwood	937, 943
v. Lidiard	1065 a	Southcote v. Watson	1208
v. Lloyd	459 b, 1457 a	Southcote's case	1365
v. Lockwood	924 a	South Sea Co. v. Bumstead	1451, 1454
v. Low	400	v. D'Oliffe	153, 158, 159
v. Lowry	894, 895	v. Wymonsdell	1521
v. Maitland	181	Sowarsby v. Lacy	1133
v. Mitchell	193	Sowden v. Sowden	1210
v. Packhurst	168	Spader v. Davis	368
v. Pincombe	132	v. Lawler	1023 d
v. Plummer	1241	Spalding v. Preston	304
v. Reese River M. Co.	400 c	Sparhawk v. Buell	1354 a
v. Rockwell	82	Sparkes v. Cator	1110, 1111
v. Smith	400 a, 653, 1274, 1360, 1361	Sparks v. Proprietors of Liverpool	
v. Spencer	184, 1196 b	Water Works	1325
v. Stowell	1172	Sparling v. Clarson	927 b
v. Streatfield	181	Spaulding v. Hedges	200 a
v. Strong	1115	v. Shalmer	1131
v. Target	812	Speakman v. Forepaugh	793 r
v. The General	1241	Spear v. Crawler	611, 612, 619, 620
v. Turentino	176	v. Grant	1252
v. Turner	763	v. Hayward	296
v. Walker	895	v. Spear	1274
v. Wheeler	1036 a, 1037	Speer v. Bidwell	1452 a, 1456 a
v. Wigley	459 e	Speke v. Walround	646
v. Winter	1233 c	Spence, <i>in re</i>	1338, 1341
		Spencer v. Earl of Chesterfield	1339

Spencer v. London and Birmingham Rail. Co.	924, 924 a	State Bank v. Stanton	897
v. Parry	492	Stawwell v. Atkins	521
v. Pearson	412	Stead v. Clay	907, 955
Sperling v. Rochfort	1396, 1401	v. Nelson	1399 a
Spettigue v. Carpenter	1450	Steal v. Mealing	499
Spickernell v. Hotham	1521 b	Stearns v. Barrett	292
Spiller, <i>in re</i>	1421 b	Steathfield v. Steathfield	1077
Spinks v. Robbins	1111	Stebbing v. Walkey	179, 180
Spooner v. Payne	1040 a, 1040 b	Stebbins v. Eddy	144 a, 195
Spottiswoode v. Clarke	934, 935, 951, 951 a	Stedman v. Hart	228
Spring v. Gray	529	Steel v. Brown	371
v. Pride	1277 c	Steele v. Babcock	322, 1211
v. S. C. Ins. Company	813 b, 1036, 1057	v. Ellmaker	293
Springfield v. Conn. River Railw.	1563	v. Stuart	683 a
Springle v. Shield	779	Steere v. Steere	1201
Spinner v. Walsh	400	Steevens Hospital v. Dyas	1537
Spurgeon v. Collier	987	Steff v. Andrews	1455
Spurgin v. White	959 e	Steinmetz v. Halthin	1406, 1417
Spurr v. Benedict	134 a	Stent v. Bailis	142, 184
Spurret v. Spiller	379	Stephens v. Callahan	811
Spurrier v. Fitzgerald	755	<i>ex parte</i>	1432, 1436, 1437
Squire v. Campbell	676, 770, 927	v. James	1354 b
v. Dean	1396	v. Olive	360, 361, 364
v. Harden	1199	v. Stevens	1075
v. Whitton	383, 736 a	Stephenson v. Wilson	897
Stackhouse v. Barnston	64 a, 529, 1520	Sterling v. Brightbill	643
Stackpole v. Beaumont	278, 280, 289, 290, 1361, 1418	Sterndair v. Hawkinson	459 e
Stacy v. Pearson	74 c	Sterry v. Arden	400, 426, 427, 434
Stafford v. Buckley	1039, 1067 b	Stevens v. Bagwell	297, 1039, 1040 f, 1049
v. Rensellaer	1226	v. Benning	941 b
v. Stafford	1534	v. Cooper	469, 484, 499, 501, 502, 633, 638, 1233 a
Staight v. Burn	951 h	v. Keating	934
Stainton v. Chadwick	74 a	v. Lynch	111
v. Carron Company	131 a	v. Orman	203 f
Stall v. Hurt	141	v. Præd	897
Stallings v. Foreman	322 a	v. Savage	1361
Stamford v. Hobart	983	v. South Devon Railway Co.	959
Stamper v. Baker	1413	v. The Rutland and Burlington R. Co.	959 e, 1556
St. Andrew's Church v. Tompkins	420	v. Trueman	987
Stanfield v. Habergham	914, 993, 1200	Stevenson v. Anderson	809, 814
Stanford v. Marshall	1401	v. Taverner	849
Stanger v. Nelson	1065 c	Steward v. Blakeway	710 b
Stanhope v. Earl Verney	1035 a, 1502	v. East India Co.	1498
v. Roberts	74 d	v. Winter	721
Staniland v. Willmott	606, 607 a, 607 c	Stewart v. Ackley	440 c
Stanley v. Cramer	456	v. Alliston	203 b
Stanton v. Allen	292	v. Bridges	87
v. Hall	1381 to 1383, 1408, 1412, 1413	v. Careless	757, 758
Stapilton v. Stapilton	113, 129, 131, 132, 168, 973	v. Crosby	1018 e
Starkie, <i>ex parte</i>	1354	v. Denton	765
State v. Benoist	1037 b	v. Dow	1241
v. Paup	137, 138 f	v. Graham	1470, 1473
v. Smith	1341	v. Hall	1241
		v. Hubbard	239 a
		v. Jones	1067 b, 1074 f

Stewart v. Kirkwell	1397 to 1401	Strahan v. Sutton	1088 a
v. Nicholls	1028 b	Strand Music Hall Co. <i>in re</i>	1537
v. Raymond	736	Strange v. Bell	806
v. Stewart	137, 138, 543 a	v. Fooks	1520 d
St. George v. Wake	273	v. Harris	541, 603, 839
Stickney v. Crane	1037 a	v. Smith	257
Stiff v. Easbourne	883 a	Stratford v. Powell	1097
Stiffe v. Everitt	1384, 1413	Stratton v. Dialogue	1201 d
Stillman v. Ashdown	356, 1026, 1216 a	Straus v. Goldsmid	1164
Stillwell v. Wilkins	834	Streat v. Streatfield	1077
v. Wilkinson	246	Street v. Rigby	670, 1451, 1457, 1495
Stirling v. Forrester	470, 485, 490, 493, 495, 498 a, 499, 638	v. Street	1472
Stuttwell v. Williams	834	Strelly v. Winson	466
St. John v. St. John	296, 298	Stribblehill v. Brett	263, 267
St. Luke's v. St. Leonard's Parish	617	Stribley v. Hawkie	744, 861, 959
St. Mary's Church v. Stocton	1127	Strickland v. Aldwich	297
Stocken v. Stocken	382, 1111	v. Strickland	624, 627, 628, 650
Stockler v. Brockelbank	722 a, 959 a	Striker v. Mott	656
v. Stocker	1394 a	Stringer v. Gardiner	180 a
Stockley v. Stockley	113, 124, 129, 131, 132, 232	v. Harper	1227
Stoddart v. Nelson	1065 e	Strong v. Blanchard	1551
Stoel v. Botelar	1476, 1477	v. Converse	1018 e
Stokes v. Holden	1040, 1040 b, 1040 c	v. Skinner	1370
v. Hunn	1065 a	v. Stewart	1522 a
v. Landgraff	951 a	v. Tompkins	1030
v. Moore	762	Stroney v. Williams	1122
Stokoe v. Robson	88	Stronghill v. Austey	1132 a
Stollings v. Freeman	321	Stroud v. Gwyer	1277 a
Stone v. Caslan	951 a	Stuart v. Coulter	614
v. Feno	1212 c	v. Kissam	321, 1381
v. Godfrey	138 f, 138 g	v. Welch	812, 813 c
v. Hale	111, 155, 165	Stubbs v. Sargon	979 a, 1061, 1068 a, 1070, 1183, 1196 a,
v. Littledale	294, 1039, 1040 b, 1040 d, 1040 e	Studholme v. Hodgson	603
v. Real Property Co.	926	Sturges v. Knapp	959 d
v. Seaver	1574	Sturgis v. Champney	64 e, 1048, 1409 a, 1410, 1411, 1414
v. Yea	1049	v. Corp	1390, 1396, 1413
Stonehouse v. Stanshaw	44	v. Morse	1521
Stones v. Cooke	1425, 1472	Sturt v. Mellish	529, 962, 964
Stoney v. Shultz	1233 a	Sturtz v. De la Rue	931
Stonington Bank v. Davis	1018 d	Stuyvesant v. Hall	1023 d, 1233 a
Stonor v. Curwen	974, 983	v. Hone	1233 a
Stopford v. Lord Canterbury	1354 a	v. Mayor, &c. of New York	728
Storer v. Great Western Railway Company	716, 721 a	Suckling v. Moreley	1494
Storrs v. Barker	111, 113, 116, 137, 139, 385, 387, 388, 389	Suffolk v. Green	1494, 1509
Story v. Holcombe	939	Suidam v. Beals	1582
v. Johnson	654, 655, 656 b, 656 c, 657	Suisse v. Lord Lowther	1111 to 1113, 1116 to 1118, 1123 a
v. Lord Windsor	67, 516	Sullings v. Sullings	652 b
v. Tompkins	1030	Sullivan v. Tuck	720, 724 a
Stowe v. Thomas	939	Summer v. Powell	162 to 164
Stowell v. Cole	522	v. Thorpe	523
St. Paul v. Viscount Dudley and Ward	486	Surcome v. Pinniger	987 a
Strachan v. Brander	297, 1049	Surman v. Barlow	400
		Sutherland v. Briggs	761
		v. Bruah	1281, 1283

Sutton <i>v.</i> Chetwynd	973	Tay <i>v.</i> Slaughter	1171
<i>v.</i> Fowler	743, 744	Taylor <i>v.</i> Great Indian, &c. Railw. Co.	390 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Montford	927	Taylor <i>v.</i> Merchants' Fire Ins. Co.	722
Swain <i>v.</i> Great Northern Railw.	1520 <i>d</i>	Taylor <i>v.</i> Allen	828
<i>v.</i> Perrine	632	<i>v.</i> Ashton	192, 193
<i>v.</i> Wall	496, 498, 499	<i>v.</i> Baker	399
Swaisland <i>v.</i> Dearsley	793 <i>e</i>	<i>v.</i> Beech	759, 768
Swan <i>v.</i> Swan	655, 658, 1237	<i>v.</i> Benham	790
Swannock <i>v.</i> Lifford	395, 410, 629, 1022	<i>v.</i> Carpenter	951, 951 <i>a</i>
Swasea Vale Railway Co. <i>v.</i> Budd	1493 <i>c</i>	<i>v.</i> Earl of Abingdon	510
Sweet <i>v.</i> Cater	935	<i>v.</i> Fields	677, 678, 1253
<i>v.</i> Shaw	940	<i>v.</i> Fleet	194
<i>v.</i> Southcote	410	<i>v.</i> Ferguson	74 <i>d</i> , 74 <i>e</i>
Sweetapple <i>v.</i> Bindon	790	<i>v.</i> Gilman	885
Sweetzer <i>v.</i> Jones	1018 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> Hawkins	422
Swift, <i>ex parte</i>	1355	<i>v.</i> Haylin	522, 527
Swinburne <i>v.</i> Swinburne	982 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Jones	354, 355, 359, 361, 363, 378
Swinfen <i>v.</i> Swinfen	737 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Knight	1323
Sydney <i>v.</i> Shelley	983	<i>v.</i> Kymer	459 <i>a</i> , 459 <i>b</i>
Symonds, <i>ex parte</i>	162	<i>v.</i> Longworth	750, 771, 775, 776
Symondson <i>v.</i> Tweed	755, 764	<i>v.</i> Neville	718
Symons <i>v.</i> James	1247	<i>v.</i> Okey	1436
<i>v.</i> Rutte	790	<i>v.</i> Page	1018 <i>c</i>
Sympson <i>v.</i> Turner	970	<i>v.</i> Patrick	231
Syngé <i>v.</i> Hales	983, 984	<i>v.</i> Plumer 819, 1210, 1258, 1259	
		<i>v.</i> Popham	1315, 1320
		<i>v.</i> Porter	484
		<i>v.</i> Portington	958 <i>a</i>
		<i>v.</i> Pugh	273
		<i>v.</i> Roberts	1280
		<i>v.</i> Rochfort	332, 345
		<i>v.</i> Salmon	315, 371
		<i>v.</i> Shepherd	894, 985
		<i>v.</i> Stibbert	396, 400, 788
		<i>v.</i> Stone	1381
		<i>v.</i> Taylor	307, 308, 309
		Taymon <i>v.</i> Mitchell	193
		Teal <i>v.</i> Wordworth	655
		Teale <i>v.</i> Teale	1516
		Teasdale <i>v.</i> Teasdale	385
		Tebbs <i>v.</i> Carpenter	1269, 1274
		Tempest, <i>in re</i>	1289 <i>b</i>
		Tendrill <i>v.</i> Smith	309
		Tenham <i>v.</i> Herbert	854 to 856, 859
		Tennant <i>v.</i> Braie	291 <i>a</i>
		Tennant's Heirs <i>v.</i> Patton	1216 <i>a</i>
		Ter Hoven <i>v.</i> Kerns	1023 <i>d</i>
		Terhune <i>v.</i> Cotton	555 <i>a</i>
		Terrill <i>v.</i> Richards	665
		Terry <i>v.</i> Harrison	955
		<i>v.</i> Hopkins	273
		Tersey <i>v.</i> Gorey	83, 85
		Tew <i>v.</i> Earl of Winterton	1249
		Thalhimer <i>v.</i> Brinkerhoff	1039, 1048 to 1050
		Thayer <i>v.</i> King	85

T.

Taggart <i>v.</i> Taggart	160, 983
Tainter <i>v.</i> Morristown	989 <i>l</i>
Tait <i>v.</i> Lord Northwick	1248 <i>d</i>
Talbot <i>v.</i> Duke of Shrewsbury	1119
<i>v.</i> Earl of Radnor	1091
<i>v.</i> Earl of Shrewsbury	1339
(Earl) <i>v.</i> Scott	918 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Stainforth	337 <i>b</i>
Taliaferro <i>v.</i> Branch Bank	894
Tallis <i>v.</i> Tallis	292
Talmadge <i>v.</i> East River Bank	926 <i>a</i> , 956
Tamworth, Lord, <i>v.</i> Lord Ferrers	915
Tanfield <i>v.</i> Davenport	1414
Taner <i>v.</i> European Bank	824 <i>a</i>
Tanner <i>v.</i> Wise	703, 742
Taplin <i>v.</i> Jones	927 <i>b</i> , 951 <i>h</i>
Tappan <i>v.</i> Deblois	1169
Tarleton <i>v.</i> Liddell	426
<i>v.</i> Tarleton	1576
Tarsey's Estate	1397 <i>a</i>
Tasker <i>v.</i> Phipps	440
Tate <i>v.</i> Austin	1373
<i>v.</i> Clark	1067 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Hilbert	606, 607, 607 <i>c</i> , 793 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Leithead	607 <i>a</i>
Tatham <i>v.</i> Williams	1520
<i>v.</i> Wright	1447

The Attorney General v. Norwich	959	Thompson v. Robinson	1065 <i>c</i>
The Chataque County Bank v. White	700	<i>v. Smith</i>	955
The Commonwealth v. Rush	926 <i>a</i>	<i>v. Stanhope</i>	944, 949
The Feoffees of Heriot's Hospital		<i>v. Thompson</i>	296, 298, 1248 <i>e</i>
<i>v. Gibson</i>	736 <i>a</i>	<i>v. Todd</i>	757
The Great Western Railroad Co. v. The Birmingham, &c. Railroad Co	954	<i>v. Warren</i>	1049
The Incorporated Society v. Richards	1154 <i>b</i>	<i>v. Winchester</i>	951 <i>a</i>
The King v. De Manneville	1341 <i>a</i>	Thompsonville Scale M. Co. v. Osgood	145
The People v. Mercein	1341, 1341 <i>a</i> , 1217	Thomson v. Shakspeare	1164 <i>a</i>
The State v. Holloway	192	<i>v. Smith</i>	177
Thelluson v. Woodford	1075, 1077, 1085, 1093, 1094, 1096	Thornber v. Sheard	309 <i>a</i>
Therasson v. Hickok	1037 <i>b</i>	Thornborough v. Baker	1016
Therman v. Abell	473	Thornborow v. Whiteacre	1303, 1307
Thetford School	1143	Thorndike v. Collington	684, 685
Thigpen v. Pitt	698	<i>v. Hunt</i>	533
Thomas v. Archbishop of Canterbury	537	Thorne v. Thorne	166, 168
<i>v. Bennet</i>	1396	Thorneycroft v. Crockett	416, 1401
<i>v. Britnell</i>	1246, 1247	Thornhill v. Evans	331
<i>v. Cronise</i>	303	Thornton v. Dixon	674
<i>v. Davies</i>	671	<i>v. Knight</i>	701
<i>v. Dering</i>	779	<i>v. Ransden</i>	1537
<i>ex parte</i>	1354	Thorp v. Gartside	1026
<i>v. Frazer</i>	158, 162, 164	<i>v. Macaulay</i>	1494, 1514
<i>v. Freeman</i>	1040	Thorpe v. Jackson	162, 163, 676
<i>v. Gyle</i>	652	<i>v. McCullum</i>	164
<i>v. James</i>	929	Threlfall v. Lunt	700 <i>a</i>
<i>v. Jenks</i>	1036	Thrupp v. Collett	1182
<i>v. Jones</i>	927	Thurber v. Jewett	1035 <i>c</i>
<i>v. McCormack</i>	101	Thynn v. Duvall	488 <i>a</i>
<i>v. Oakley</i>	928, 929	<i>v. Thynn</i>	64, 256
<i>v. Porter</i>	1326, 1326 <i>a</i>	Tibbetts v. George	1047
<i>v. Roberts</i>	1341	<i>v. Tibbetts</i>	1068, 1068 <i>a</i> , 1070, 1085, 1097
<i>v. Tyler</i>	1493 <i>a</i>	Tibbs v. Morris	793 <i>s</i>
<i>v. Wyse</i>	44	Tickle v. Short	526
Thompson v. Attfield	168	Tiernan v. Jackson	1039, 1041 to 1045, 1036
<i>v. Brown</i>	495 <i>a</i> , 546 to 548, 890, 1271, 1272	<i>v. Rolland</i>	776, 1080, 1097
<i>v. Charnock</i>	670	Tiffany v. Crawford	645 <i>a</i>
<i>v. Ebbets</i>	813 <i>a</i> , 824	Tiffin v. Tiffin	998
<i>v. Finch</i>	1280	Tilley v. Bridges	511, 512, 628
<i>v. Graham</i>	694, 695	Tillman v. Cowand	404
<i>v. Harcourt</i>	710	Tilton v. Tilton	161, 761
<i>v. Harrison</i>	271	Timson v. Ramsbottom	395, 398, 421 <i>a</i> , 1035 <i>a</i> , 1047
<i>v. Hill Griffin</i>	1354 <i>a</i>	Tinney v. Tinney	767
<i>v. Hodgson</i>	605	Tinsley v. Anderson	499 <i>b</i>
<i>v. Leach</i>	225, 229 <i>a</i>	Tipping v. Eckersley	951 <i>a</i>
<i>v. Leake</i>	177	<i>v. Tipping</i>	565, 1376
<i>v. Lewis</i>	677	Tissen v. Tissen	844
<i>v. Lumbert</i>	203 <i>f</i>	Tittenson v. Peat	1454, 1498
<i>v. Hudson</i>	1035 <i>g</i>	Tobey v. The County of Bristol	959 <i>a</i> , 1457
<i>v. Noel</i>	1458	Todd v. Barlow	1454
<i>v. Perkins</i>	1253	<i>v. Buckman</i>	1036 <i>a</i>
		<i>v. Gee</i>	779, 795 to 799
		<i>v. Taft</i>	724 <i>b</i> , 771

Todd v. Wilson	523	Treadwell v. Treadwell	1248 b
Toker v. Toker	706 b	Tregonwell v. Sydenham	1200
Toller v. Carteret	743, 899, 1293	Trelawney v. Booth	790
Tollett v. Tollett	105 a, 169, 170, 1061	Tremblestown v. Lloyd	184
Tolson v. Collins	1111, 1122	Trench v. Fenn	1435
Tombs v. Elers	1339	Trenchard v. Wanley	184, 190
v. Roch	565, 571	Trent v. Hanning	1067 b
Tomereau v. Poyntz	181	Trenton Bridge v. City Bridge	925 b
Tomkins v. Tomkins	1347 f	Trevelyan v. Charter	310
v. Wilshear	442	Trevillian v. Mayor of Exeter	1227
Tomlinson v. Harrison	1468	Trevor v. McKay	895
v. Savage	201, 293	v. Perkins	1248 a
Tompkins v. Burnett	298	v. Trevor	985, 986
Tonnins v. Prout	907	Trexler v. Miller	184
Tonson v. Walker	935	Treyes v. Robinson	1248 d
Tooke v. Hartley	1025	Trimmer v. Bayne	494, 559, 563, 564 a,
v. Hastings	1231	633, 789, 1111, 1114, 1220	
Toole v. Medicott	764	Tritton v. Foote	722
Topham v. Duke of Portland	203 f	Trott v. Vernon	1247
Toplis v. Baker	705 a, 1028 b	Troughton v. Binks	423, 581, 1023
Torrey v. Bank of New Orleans	316	v. Troughton	176, 418
Tothill v. Pitt	1067 b	Troutbeck v. Broughey	1397 a
Tottenham v. Green	694 a	Trower v. Newcome	191, 199
Tottenham's Estate	164 h	Trull v. Bigelow	434
Totty v. Nesbitt	81	v. Eastman	344, 729, 1040, 1040 b
Toulman v. Price	81	Trulock v. Roby	488 a, 1581
Toulmin v. Steere	397, 421	Truly v. Wanzer	887, 1582
Toulunne v. Chapman	929	Truscott v. King	459 a
Tourle v. Rand	381, 393, 1020	Trustees v. Wright	1226
Tourson's case	229	Trustees of Baptist Association	1141
Tourville v. Naish	1057	Trustees of Huntington v. Nicoll	854,
Tovey v. Young	895	859, 901	
Towers v. Davys	707	Trustees of Watertown v. Cowen	921,
Town v. Needham	655	927	
Townend v. Toker	706 c	Tucker v. Condy	585
Townley v. Sherborne	1280	v. Laing	326
Townsend v. Ash	509, 511, 514	v. Madden	157
v. Carpenter	1057 a	v. Oxley	675, 1437
v. Devaynes	674, 1207	v. Phipps	184, 254
v. Ives	1447	v. Seamen's Aid Soc.	1169, 1170
v. Lowfield	190	v. Wilson	1031
v. Wentworth	362 a	Tuckfield v. Buller	652
v. Windham	176, 352, 355,	Tudor v. Samyne	1410
356, 359, 363, 568		Tufnell v. Constable	433, 706, 793 a
Townshend v. Martyn	1227	v. Page	1171
v. Stangroom	767, 770,	Tufton v. Harding	891
770 a		Tulk v. Moxhay	737
v. Windham	1047, 1372,	Tullett v. Armstrong	1384, 1400
1376, 1396		Tullit v. Tullit	1357
Tracy v. Sackett	238	Tulloch v. Hartley	623
Trafford v. Ashton	1064	Tunnichiff's case	1476
v. Boehm	1273	Tunstall v. Boothby	1040 d to 1040 f
Traip v. Gould	74 b	v. Trappes	1216 b
Transatlantic Company v. Pietroni	589	Turnbull v. Gadsden	203
Traphalgen v. Traphalgen	793 r	Turner v. Burkinshaw	462 b
Trash v. White	1028 b	v. Davis	498
Traverse v. Bulkeley	1368	v. Harvey	191, 201, 205, 207,
Treacle v. Coke	684	693	
Treadwell v. Brown	1493 b	v. Marriott	1232

Turner v. Morgan	656	United States v. Durean	638
v. Nye	987 <i>a</i>	v. Eckford's Ex'rs	459 <i>b</i> , 459 <i>g</i>
v. Ogden	1164	v. Green	1341 <i>a</i>
v. Turner	137, 554, 891	v. Howland	57, 1037, 1038
v. Wise	74 <i>d</i> , 703	v. Hunter	499 <i>d</i> , 1037
v. Wright	518 <i>a</i>	v. January	459 <i>b</i> , 459 <i>g</i>
Turner's case	1410	v. Kirkpatrick	326, 459 <i>a</i> , 459 <i>b</i> , 459 <i>g</i>
Turton v. Benson	269	v. McLemore	893
Tweddell v. Tweddell	576	v. Morrison	1216
Twedale v. Coventry	571	v. Price	164
v. Tweedale	1065 <i>a</i>	v. Prioleau	959 <i>b</i>
Twining v. Morrice	120, 201, 293	v. Wardell	459 <i>a</i> , 459 <i>g</i>
Twisden v. Twisden	1106, 1109, 1110	v. Williams	677
Twiss v. Massey	675	Universities of Oxford and Cam-	
Twistleton v. Griffith	331, 335, 339	bridge v. Richardson	927, 933, 934, 935
Twogood, ex parte	1437	Upham v. Lafavour	459 <i>b</i>
v. Swanston	523	Upwell v. Halsey	844
Twort v. Twort	916	Urquhart v. King	1208
Twypont v. Warcup	195	Usborne v. Usborne	1017
Twyne's case	352, 354, 355, 365, 368, 369, 373	Usticke v. Peters	1075
Tyffon v. Tyffon	998	Utterson v. Mair	828
Tyler v. Lake	1382, 1383	Uvedale v. Ettrick	1288
Tyndale v. Warre	1216 <i>a</i> , 1216 <i>c</i>		
Tyngeldew v. Warham	44		
Tynt v. Tynt	1376	V.	
Tyrrell v. Hope	1381, 1382	Vachel v. Jeffries	1208
v. The Bank of London	329 <i>b</i> , 1277 <i>c</i>	v. Vachel	844
Tyson v. Cox	883	Vail v. Foster	1226
v. Fairclough	835	Vallè v. North Mo. Railw.	1456 <i>a</i>
v. Passmore	161	Valliant v. Dodemede	684
v. Watts	769	Van Bergen v. Van Bergen	927
Tysor v. Lutterloh	87	Van Buren v. Digges	1318
		Vance v. Andrews	74 <i>a</i>
U.		v. Blair	665
Udell v. Atherton	243 <i>a</i>	v. Campbell's Heirs	291 <i>b</i>
Ulrich v. Littlefield	179	Vandergucht v. La Blaquièrè	1400, 1425, 1472
Underhill v. Harwood	158, 162, 163, 239, 246, 694	Vanderheyden v. Mallory	1398
v. Van Cortlandt	1452, 1454, 1455, 1463	Vanderplank v. King	1074 <i>a</i>
Underwood v. Hatton	90, 549	Vandervoort v. Smith	16
v. Hitchcock	742	Vanderwerker v. Vt. Central Railw.	1456 <i>a</i>
v. Lord Courtown	130, 396, 401, 402, 404	Vanderzee v. Willis	1032, 1034
v. Stevens	1269, 1281, 1284	Vandoren v. Mayor of New York	700, 700 <i>a</i>
Ungless v. Tuff	1269 <i>a</i>	Van Duyne v. Vreeland	786
Union Bank v. Kerr	806	Van Duzer v. Van Duzer	1361, 1414
Union Bank of Georgetown v.		Vandyck v. Herritt	298
Geary	118	Vane v. Cobbold	204
United States Co. v. Wiley	824 <i>a</i>	Van Epps v. Van Deussen	1361, 1403, 1411
United States Ins. Co. v. Shriver	633	v. Van Epps	316, 321
United States v. Bank of Virginia	1494	Van Horn v. Fonda	1211
v. Cushman	164	Van Mater v. Ely	564 <i>e</i>

Van Meter v. Sickler	543 a
Van Meter v. M'Fadden	64 d, 1020
Van Riper v. Van Riper	1122
Van Valkenburgh v. Watson	1347 b
Varick v. Corporation of N. York	870
v. Briggs	1503 a
Vattier v. Hinde	1502
Vaughan v. Buck	1403, 1421 a
v. Burslem	985
<i>ex parte</i>	1322
v. Fitzgerald	1512
v. Welsh	889
Vaughn v. Vanderstegen	1401 a
Vauxhall Bridge Co. v. Spencer	260,
	271, 293 a
Vavasour v. Chadwick	44
Veal v. Veal	607 d
Veazie v. Williams	201, 293
Veghte v. Hoagland	1455
Venning v. Leckie	665
Vent v. Osgood	240
Verney v. Verney	487
Vernon v. Bethel	1018, 1019
v. Keyes	199, 203
v. Fawdry	523, 527, 1286
v. Vernon	482, 987
Vernon's case	1080
Verplank v. Sterry	359, 362
Vesey v. Jameson	1157, 1164
Vickers v. Vickers	1457 a
Vickery v. Welsh	292
Vidal v. Girard's Executors	44, 1154 b,
	1154 c
Viele v. Troy & B. Railw.	769
Viers v. Montgomery	433
Vigers v. Pike	202, 203 a, 769, 771, 1520
Villard v. Roberts	404
Villa Real or De Costa v. Lord Gal-	
way	1088
v. Mellish	
	1338, 1340
Villers v. Villers	998
v. Beaumont	433
Vincent v. Bowesley	684 a
Viney v. Chaplin	769 a
Vivan v. Mortlock	892
Vivers v. Tuck	778 b
Voll v. Smith	765
Voorhees v. De Meyer	141
v. Presbyterian Church	316
Vose v. Grant	1252
Vulliamy v. Noble	676, 1437
Vyvyan v. Vyvyan	1520 c

W.

W— v. B—	300 a
Wade v. Colvar	231

Wade v. Coope	499
v. Howard	1035 b
v. Paget	174
Wadeer v. East India Co.	1496
Wadham v. Calcraft	1315, 1321, 1322
Wafer v. Mocato	1320, 1324, 1326 a
Wagstaff v. Smith	1382, 1390, 1392,
	1401
v. Wagstaff	174
Wainwright v. Bendlowes	572
Wait, <i>in re</i>	677
Waite v. Horwood	1210
Wake v. Conyers	610, 613, 615, 619,
	612
v. Wake	1098
Wakeman v. Grover	1036, 1036 a
Walburn v. Ingilby	671
Walcott v. Hall	92, 503
v. Keith	1030
Walcot v. Walker	937
Waldo v. Caley	1164, 1190
v. Martin	295
Waldron, <i>ex parte</i>	1341 a
Wales v. Mellen	1016
Walker, Ann, <i>in re</i>	1406, 1417, 1418,
	1420, 1421, 1423
v. Armstrong	164 d
v. Barker	564 b
v. Bradley	92
v. Burroughs	352, 353, 356,
	360, 361, 363
v. Childs	1180
v. Denne	790, 1196 b
v. Hill	92
v. Jackson	572, 573, 1077
v. Jones	1023 c
v. Meagher	555, 556
v. Miller	410
v. Perkins	296
v. Preswick	789
v. Robbins	898, 1582
v. Smallwood	400 a, 1127
v. Symonds	190, 216, 1274,
	1275
v. Walker	161, 759, 768, 1018
v. W. H. & B. Railw.	1231 b
v. Wetherel	1355
v. Witter	1576
Wall v. Arrington	165
v. Cockrell	468 a
v. Stubbs	197
v. Wall	1097
Wallace v. Pomfret	1111
v. Wallace	309 a
Waller v. Childs	1190
v. Duke of Portland	297
Wallis v. Crimes	1315
v. Duke of Portland	1049,
	1493 a, 1494

	Abbs	1016
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	61, 105 <i>a</i> , 256
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1204
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1521 <i>b</i>
	Bargoigne	907
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1097
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1030
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1261 <i>b</i>
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1593 <i>b</i>
	Whorwood	1424, 1425
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	604 <i>a</i>
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1436
	Paper Co.	111
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	355, 127, 1377 <i>a</i> ,
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1379, 1415
	Wickham	919
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1520 <i>a</i>
	<i>Abbs v. Woodroffe</i>	1146
	<i>Abbs v. Bush</i>	379
	<i>Abbs v. Dorr</i>	499, 633
	<i>Abbs v. Steers</i>	231
	<i>Abbs v. Wigsell</i>	486
	<i>Abbs v. Davis</i>	1233
	<i>Abbs v. Howe</i>	293
	<i>Abbs v. Drake</i>	1338
	<i>Abbs v. Wheeler</i>	925 <i>f</i>
	<i>Abbs v. Wilcox</i>	1106, 1107
	<i>Abbs v. Hobson</i>	440
	Wild's case	604 <i>a</i>
	<i>Abbs v. Patterson</i>	376
	<i>Abbs v. Gibson</i>	193, 399
	<i>Abbs v. Milne</i>	653 <i>a</i>
	<i>Abbs v. Wayland</i>	400 <i>a</i>
	<i>Abbs v. Wildman</i>	987 <i>a</i>
	Wildman's Trust, <i>in re</i>	604 <i>a</i>
	<i>Abbs v. Gresham</i>	131 <i>a</i>
	<i>Abbs v. Ferris</i>	1936
	<i>Abbs v. Holmes</i>	174
	<i>Abbs v. Steward</i>	1271
	<i>Abbs v. Wilkes</i>	699, 735 <i>a</i> , 1427
	<i>Abbs v. Wilkin</i>	412, 659, 654
	<i>Abbs v. Atken</i>	932, 934, 935, 939,
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	940
	<i>Abbs v. Hogg</i>	1270 <i>a</i>
	<i>Abbs v. Stearns</i>	1258
	<i>Abbs v. Brayfield</i>	229
	<i>Abbs v. Joughin</i>	182
	<i>Abbs v. Henderson</i>	162, 676
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	303
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	164 <i>b</i>
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1016 <i>a</i> , 1035 <i>b</i>
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	465
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1247
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	120, 123, 134, 236,
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	694
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1401 <i>a</i> , 1491 <i>d</i>
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	1424
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	273
	<i>Abbs v. ...</i>	138 <i>f</i>

Webb <i>v.</i> England	473 <i>a</i>	West <i>v.</i> Belcher	499 <i>d</i>
<i>v.</i> Hewitt	326	<i>v.</i> Errissey	160, 165, 987
<i>v.</i> Hunt	926	<i>v.</i> Howard	1370
In the Matter of,	1364, 1365	<i>v.</i> Knight 1147, 1164, 1170, 1189	1526
<i>v.</i> Lymington	704	<i>v.</i> Randall	1526
<i>v.</i> Manchester & Leeds Railw. Co.	1554	<i>v.</i> Reid	399, 1020
<i>v.</i> Rice	125	<i>v.</i> Shuttleworth	1164
<i>v.</i> Shaftesbury	480	<i>v.</i> Skipp	677, 1243, 1253
<i>v.</i> Shaftesbury, Earl of,	1096, 1357	<i>v.</i> Sloan	322 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Webb	684	Westbrooke <i>v.</i> Harbesson	161
Webber <i>v.</i> Hunt	1277	Westerman <i>v.</i> Means	1318
<i>v.</i> Smith 1321, 1322, 1326 <i>a</i>		Western <i>v.</i> Russell	244
<i>v.</i> Webber	603	<i>v.</i> Medamot	957 <i>a</i>
Webster <i>v.</i> Cecil	749 <i>b</i>	Western R. Road Corp. <i>v.</i> Babcock	769
<i>v.</i> Harrington	893 <i>a</i>	Westervelt <i>v.</i> Huff	400
<i>v.</i> Farr	604 <i>a</i>	Westfaling <i>v.</i> Westfaling	563, 1216 <i>c</i>
<i>v.</i> Pawson	1516	Westley <i>v.</i> Clarke	1281, 1283
<i>v.</i> Woodford	225	Westmeath <i>v.</i> Salisbury	1427, 1428
Wedderburn <i>v.</i> Wedderburn	317, 465, 676 <i>b</i> , 1520	<i>v.</i> Westmeath 735 <i>a</i> , 1247, 1428	
Wedgewood <i>v.</i> Adams	742	Weston <i>v.</i> Barker	972, 1037
Weed <i>v.</i> Terry	732	<i>v.</i> Collins	777 <i>a</i>
Weeds <i>v.</i> Bristow	1065 <i>c</i>	<i>v.</i> Hight	607
Weeks <i>v.</i> Staker	855	Wetherby <i>v.</i> Dixon	1117
Wekett <i>v.</i> Raby	706	Wethered <i>v.</i> Wethered	265, 343, 1040 <i>b</i>
Welby <i>v.</i> Duke of Rutland	857	Wetherell <i>v.</i> Wilson	1289 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Welby 229, 1084, 1085, 1093, 1094		Wetmore <i>v.</i> White	761
Welch <i>v.</i> Mandeville	1056	Weymouth <i>v.</i> Boyer	74 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Parran	499 <i>d</i>	Whale <i>v.</i> Booth	551, 579, 580
Wellbeloved <i>v.</i> Jones	1147	Whaley <i>v.</i> Bagenal	758, 765
Wellborn <i>v.</i> Williams	1227	<i>v.</i> Dawson	520, 621, 652
Weller <i>v.</i> Smeaton	855, 857	<i>v.</i> Norton	296
Welles <i>v.</i> Middleton	310, 312, 313	Whalley <i>v.</i> Whalley	331, 1521 <i>a</i>
Wellesley <i>v.</i> Duke of Beaufort	1334, 1337 to 1339, 1341	Wharton <i>v.</i> Baskee	604 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Wellesley 518 <i>a</i> , 729, 915, 1231, 1328, 1334, 1339, 1342, 1343, 1349, 1351, 1352, 1354		<i>v.</i> Earl of Durham	1109, 1111, 1113
Wellington <i>v.</i> Mackintosh	670	<i>v.</i> May	342, 344, 523, 899
Wellman <i>v.</i> Bowring	1065 <i>b</i>	Wheatley <i>v.</i> Calhoun	499, 499 <i>d</i>
Wells <i>v.</i> Bannister	388	<i>v.</i> Parr	793 <i>c</i>
<i>v.</i> Bridgport Hy. Co.	257 <i>b</i>	Wheaton <i>v.</i> Peters	940
<i>v.</i> Chapman	927	Wheddon <i>v.</i> Spode	1248 <i>d</i>
<i>v.</i> Cooper	458, 464	Wheeler <i>v.</i> Bingham	287, 289
<i>v.</i> Doane	1164	<i>ex parte</i>	1338
<i>v.</i> Foster	1040 <i>b</i> , 1040 <i>d</i> to 1040 <i>f</i>	<i>v.</i> Horne	446, 447
<i>v.</i> Smith	1324	<i>v.</i> Sheers	1208
<i>v.</i> Tucker	606, 607 <i>a</i> , 607 <i>c</i>	<i>v.</i> Smith	125, 979 <i>a</i> , 979 <i>b</i> , 1154 <i>c</i> , 1156
Welsh <i>v.</i> Usher	1020	<i>v.</i> Sumner	1036
Wench <i>v.</i> Winchester	195	<i>v.</i> Wheeler	1016
Wendell <i>v.</i> Van Rensselaer	313, 385, 389	Whelan <i>v.</i> Whelan	309
Wentworth <i>v.</i> Lloyd	329 <i>c</i>	Wheldale <i>v.</i> Partridge	790
Wessenger <i>v.</i> Hunt	604 <i>a</i>	Whichcote <i>v.</i> Lawrence	321
		Whicherly <i>v.</i> Whicherly	443, 1528
		Whicker <i>v.</i> Hume	1164
		Whistler <i>v.</i> Newman	1401
		<i>v.</i> Webster 1093, 1094, 1098	
		Whitaker <i>v.</i> Newman	1447
		<i>v.</i> Rush	1434, 1435, 1437, 1440, 1444

Whitaker v. Garnett	229 <i>b</i>	Whittemore v. Gibbs	1016
<i>v.</i> Wright	549	Whitten v. Russell	61, 105 <i>a</i> , 256
Whitbread v. Brockhurst	757, 759, 762, 765	<i>v.</i> Whitten	1204
<i>ex parte</i>	1020	Whitney v. Lowe	1521 <i>b</i>
Whitchurch v. Bevis	755, 757, 762, 764, 768	Whittingham v. Burgoyne	907
<i>v.</i> Golding	82, 83	Whittle v. Henning	1097
Whitcomb v. Minchin	322	<i>v.</i> Skinner	1030
White v. Baker	604 <i>a</i>	Whitwell v. Warner	1261 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Baring	1241	Whitworth v. Guagain	1503 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Bishop of Peterborough	829, 836, 837	Whorwood v. Whorwood	1424, 1425
<i>v.</i> Bush	303	Whyte v. Collins	604 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Cox	321	<i>v.</i> O'Brien	1436
<i>v.</i> Cudden	751 <i>a</i>	Widby v. Cooper Co.	111
<i>v.</i> Damon	742	Wickes v. Clarke	355, 427, 1377 <i>a</i> , 1379, 1415
<i>v.</i> Evans	1208	Wickham v. Wickham	919
<i>v.</i> Hall	744, 899, 1294	Wicks v. Hunt	1520 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Hillaire	418, 547	Widmore v. Woodroffe	1146
<i>v.</i> Hussey	377	Wiggin v. Bush	379
<i>v.</i> Lady Lincoln	468	<i>v.</i> Dorr	499, 633
<i>v.</i> Langdon	1540, 1541	Wigglesworth v. Steers	231
<i>v.</i> Nett	1401 <i>f</i>	Wigsell v. Wigsell	486
<i>v.</i> Nutt	104	Wikoff v. Davis	1233
<i>v.</i> Parnter	423, 581, 1023, 1028 <i>a</i> , 1028 <i>b</i> , 1035, 1520	Wilbur v. Howe	293
<i>v.</i> Small	236	Wilcox v. Drake	1338
<i>v.</i> Thornborough	985	<i>v.</i> Wheeler	925 <i>f</i>
<i>v.</i> Tudors	205	<i>v.</i> Wilcox	1106, 1107
<i>v.</i> Warner	1322 to 1324	Wild v. Hobson	440
<i>v.</i> White	487, 1141, 1166, 1167, 1170, 1190, 1456 <i>a</i>	Wild's case	604 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Williams	134 <i>a</i> , 451, 596	Wildbridge v. Patterson	376
<i>v.</i> Wilson	165, 1147	Wilde v. Gibson	193, 399
Whiteburn v. Hines	238	<i>v.</i> Milne	653 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Whitchurch	988, 1001	Wildgrove v. Wayland	400 <i>a</i>
Whitefield v. Bewitt	513, 517	Wildman v. Wildman	987 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Faussat	64 <i>c</i> , 79, 81, 84, 1040 <i>c</i>	Wildman's Trust, in re	604 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Hales	1341	Wiles v. Gresham	131 <i>a</i>
<i>ex parte</i>	1329, 1354	Wilkes v. Ferris	1036
Whitehead r. Lassiter	604 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Holmes	174
<i>v.</i> Peck	301	<i>v.</i> Steward	1274
Whitehorn v. Hines	239	<i>v.</i> Wilkes	699, 735 <i>a</i> , 1427
Whitehouse v. Partridge	1468, 1470, 1474	Wilkin v. Wilkin	442, 650, 654
Whitewater Valley Canal Co. v.		Wilkins v. Atken	932, 934, 935, 939, 940
<i>Comegys</i>	812	<i>v.</i> Hogg	1270 <i>a</i>
Whitlock v. Duffield	722	<i>v.</i> Stearns	1258
Whitman v. Weston	165	Wilkinson v. Brayfield	229
Whitmel v. Farrel	740	<i>v.</i> Jonghin	182
Whitmore, ex parte	1425, 1472	<i>v.</i> Henderson	162, 676
<i>v.</i> Oxbourne	547	<i>v.</i> L'Etugier	303
<i>v.</i> Thornton	895	<i>v.</i> Nelson	164 <i>b</i>
Whitney v. Smith	1277 <i>g</i>	<i>v.</i> Simson	1016 <i>a</i> , 1035 <i>b</i>
<i>v.</i> Stone	793 <i>r</i>	<i>v.</i> Stafford	465
Whitridge v. Packhurst	793 <i>r</i>	Willan v. Lancaster	1247
Whittemore v. Cowen	440 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> Willan	120, 123, 134, 236, 694
		Willard v. Eastham	1401 <i>a</i> , 1401 <i>d</i>
		Williams v. Callow	1424
		<i>v.</i> Carle	273
		<i>v.</i> Champion	138 <i>f</i>

Williams v. Chitty	1246	Wilson v. Davison	1132
v. Cooke	522	v. Fielding	551 to 553, 564
v. Craddock	1503 b	v. Foreman	1210
v. Davies	1436, 1436 a	v. Greenwood	672
<i>ex parte</i>	1253	v. Harman	480
v. Earl of Jersey	926, 959 a	v. Hart	956
v. Evans	710 a	v. Ivat	596
v. Everett	1039, 1041 to 1043, 1045	v. Lord Townshend	1077, 1096
v. Flight	700	v. Mason	1257
v. Green	1318	v. Mayor of New York	959 a
v. Griffith	459 a	v. Paul	454
v. Halbert	809	v. Pigott	1106
v. Harden	74	v. Townsend	927 a, 929 b
v. Howard	709	v. Troup	1022, 1211
<i>in re</i>	1307 a	v. Wilson	735 a, 1406, 1425, 1427
v. Jones	1208	v. Waterman	451
v. Kershaw	1157, 1174, 1180	v. West Hartlepool, &c. Co.	778 b, 1537
v. Lamb	410, 630, 631	& Worrall's case	435
v. Lee	894, 895	Wilt v. Franklin	1036 a
v. Lord Lonsdale	1195 b	Wiltsey v. Mangles	1065 c
v. Lucas	1249	Wiltshire v. Rabbitts	1035 a
v. Nixon	1280 a, 1283	Winch v. Brutton	1070
v. N. Y. Central Rail- road	927	v. James	1361
v. Owen	502 a	v. Page	1408
v. Owens	421 a, 499	v. The Birkenhead, Lanca- shire, &c. R. Co.	959, 1559
v. Prince of Wales Life Ins. &c. Co.	940	v. Winchester	161, 770
v. Protheroe	1048, 1050, 1053	Winchelsea, Earl of, v. Norcliffe	1357
v. Rawlinson	459 g	v. Duke of Norfolk	542
v. Steward	741, 783	Winchester, Bishop of, v. Knight	69
v. Thorp	1057		467, 513, 515
v. Walker	809	v. Paine	405, 406
v. William	952, 1068 b, 1154 c	v. Merchant's R. Co.	793 g
v. Williams	337 c	Winchester v. Fournier	700
Williamson v. Berry	1328	Wind v. Jekyll	532, 540, 593, 1040
v. Codrington	987	Wing v. Harvey	1325 a
v. Curtis	1130	v. Lefebury	788
v. Gihon	263, 264, 267	Winn v. Williams	395
v. Naylor	1521 a	Winne v. Reynolds	775, 778
Willie v. Lugg	1023	Winship v. Pitts	919
Willing v. Peters	790	Winslow v. Cummings	1166, 1169, 1170
Willis v. Astor	722	Winstanlay v. Lee	925, 927
v. Brown	1164	Winter v. Lord Anson	1225, 1226
v. Jarnegan	236, 331, 382, 526	v. D'Evreux	732
v. Parkinson	649	Wintour v. Clifton	1075, 1097
v. Slade	652, 656	Wise v. Shepherd	633
Willison v. Watkins	529, 1520	Wisely v. Findlay	653
Willoughby v. Willoughby	998, 1000 to 1002, 1502	Wiseman v. Beake	337
Wills v. Maccarmick	1452	v. Roper	740
v. Sayers	1381 to 1383	Wiser v. Blachley	153, 164
v. Stradling	759, 763, 765	Wiswall v. McGown	794, 798
Willson v. Pack	1375	Witby v. Mangles	1065 b
Wilnot v. Maccabe	1494	Witcher v. Hall	883 a
Wilson, <i>ex parte</i>	326, 1017	Withers v. Pinchard	731, 734
v. Cleur	1016, 1016 a		
v. Darlington	575		

Withers v. Teadon	98	Woollands v. Crowcher	1413
Withy v. Cottle	722, 723, 796	Woolston v. Tribe	164 h
Witley v. Price	348	Woolscombe, <i>ex parte</i>	1338
Witter v. Witter	1357	Woolstonecroft v. Long	554
Witts v. Boddington	1061	v. Woolstonecroft	1248 d
v. Dawkins	1394	Worcester, Inhabitants of, v. Eaton	298
Woffington v. Sparks	493, 499 b	Wormack v. Rogers	246
Wolcott v. Jones	1437 a	Wormley v. Rowcliffe	718, 719
v. Robbins	619	v. Wormley	1130, 1134, 1262
Wolfe v. Frost	926 a	Worms v. Smith	958 b
v. Luyster	201	Worrall v. Jacob	112, 433, 1427, 1428
Wollstonecraft, <i>ex parte</i>	1341 a	v. Molar	1229
Wood v. Abrey	239, 337, 338	Worsley v. De Mattos	369, 371, 422
v. Birch	1236	v. Earl of Scarborough	405, 408
v. Burnam	974	v. Johnson	1065 b
v. Cone	790	Worthington v. Evans	291
v. Cox	979 a, 1068 a to 1070, 1073, 1196 a	v. Morgan	400 a, 1020
v. Cruisman	710	Wortley v. Birkhead	414, 415, 419, 1503
v. Downes	310, 312, 313, 318, 345, 1040 g, 1048, 1049	Wotten v. Copeland	656
v. Dummer	1252, 1253	Wray v. Steele	1201, 1206
v. Fenwick	240	v. Williams	629
v. Griffith	778, 779, 1049, 1050, 1051, 1454, 1455, 1459, 1485	Wren v. Bradley	291 a
v. Keyes	790	Wrexham v. Huddleston	673
v. Mann	64 c, 1502, 1503	Wride v. Clarke	553, 554, 557
v. McCann	293 b	Wright v. Atkins	1065 b, 1069 to 1072
v. Norman	1236	v. Bates	1522 a
v. Rowcliffe	709	v. Bell	717, 719, 722
v. Scarth	737 a	v. Booth	229
v. Scoles	683 a	v. Cadogan	1371, 1390, 1391
v. Sutcliffe	927	v. Cartwright	844, 990
v. White	1060, 1127	v. Eaves	1521 b
v. Wood	1065 b	v. Englefield	1388, 1391
Wood, <i>in re</i>	1364 a	v. Goff	147
Woodbury Savings Bank v. Charter Oak Ins. Co.	188 l	v. Hunter	496, 504
Woodcock's case	381	v. Laing	459 b
Woodcock v. Bennett	787, 795 to 797	v. Leonard	243 a
Wooden v. Haviland	153	v. Moreley	327, 493, 499, 499 a, 499 b, 499 d, 502, 638, 1408, 1424
Woodgate v. Field	548 a	v. Naylor	1340, 1352
Woodhouse v. Hoskins	996	v. Pilling	310, 313, 317, 318, 416
v. Meredith	300, 315	v. Proud	310, 313, 317, 318
v. Shipley	274, 275	v. Rand	164
Woodman v. Blake	1315	v. Simpson	499 d, 559, 638 to 640, 849
Woodmeston v. Walker	1380, 1384	v. Snow	193
Woodreff v. Barton	254	v. St. George	736 b
c. Farnham	303	v. Vanderplank	309 a
Woods v. Woods	1289 a	v. Ward	808, 817 a
Woodward v. Aspinwall	722, 736 a	v. Wilson	246
<i>ex parte</i>	1341 a	v. Wright	400 a, 402, 607 c, 1040, 1040 b, 1040 c
v. Schatzell	1475	Wrightson v. Hudson	398, 402, 406
Woodworth v. Campbell	656, 658	Wyatt v. Barwell	239, 309
v. Van Buskerk	888	Wych v. Meal	1501
Woolam v. Hern	152 to 154, 158, 161, 767, 770, 770 a		
Woolaston v. Wright	812		
Woolridge v. Norris	499		

Wyche v. Green	116, 162, 165	Yarborough v. Thompson	806
Wycherley v. Wycherley	787, 987	Yard v. Ford	924 <i>a</i>
Wycombe Railw. Co. v. Donning- ton Hospital	749 <i>b</i>	Yare v. Harrison	603, 839
Wykham v. Wykham	481	Yates v. Bell	1041 to 1043, 1045
Wylie v. Wylie	1074 <i>d</i>	<i>v.</i> Boen	225, 227, 229 <i>a</i>
Wyllie v. Wilkes	1315	<i>v.</i> Cole	180
Wyman v. Babcock	1018	<i>v.</i> Compton	790
Wynch, <i>ex parte</i>	1067 <i>b</i>	<i>v.</i> Hambley	510, 518
Wynn v. Williams	410	<i>v.</i> Jack	929 <i>c</i>
Wynne v. Callender	303, 695, 695 <i>a</i> , 700	<i>v.</i> Madden	1040 <i>b</i> , 1065 <i>a</i>
<i>v.</i> Hank	1368 <i>a</i>	Yeates v. Groves	1047
<i>v.</i> Hawkins	1070, 1073	Yeomans v. Chatterton	379
<i>v.</i> Morgan	776, 777	York, Mayor of, <i>v.</i> Pilkington	520, 617, 621, 856, 893
<i>v.</i> Newborough, Lord,	833	York and Jersey Steam Co. <i>v.</i> Jersey Co.	633
Wynstanley v. Lee	925, 927	Younge, <i>ex parte</i>	466, 1242
Wynter v. Bold	1003	<i>v.</i> Burton	710
Wythe v. Henneker	565	<i>v.</i> Frier	1253
Wythes v. Labouchere	408, 498 <i>a</i>	<i>v.</i> Hassard	565
X.			
Ximenes v. Franco	907	<i>v.</i> Holmes	591
Y.			
Yale v. Dederer	1401 <i>d</i>	<i>v.</i> Keighley	1253
Yallop, <i>ex parte</i>	1206	<i>v.</i> Peachey	239, 309, 768, 1201
Yanger v. Skinner	736 <i>e</i>	<i>v.</i> Walter	1455
Z.			
Zane's case	1143	<i>v.</i> Wood	1226
Zebach v. Smith	1062	Yovatt v. Winyard	952
Zouch v. Parsons	240, 241		

COMMENTARIES
ON
EQUITY JURISPRUDENCE.

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CHAPTER I.

THE TRUE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF EQUITY JURISPRUDENCE.

[* § 1-24. Equity, as applied to jurisprudence, does not comprehend the broader principles of universal law, which are properly embraced in the more extended import of the term Natural Equity, or what is sometimes called Moral Equity.]

§ 25-34. Equity jurisprudence, as a distinct branch of the law, is the complement of legal administration, whereby through defect of evidence, or from imperfect procedure, it is unable to afford that ample and specific redress for all injuries, which courts of equity may do, by requiring the defendant to answer, upon his conscience; by reforming mistakes in written contracts, and by injunctions, both restrictive and mandatory, and in many other ways. It is that portion of remedial justice which is administered exclusively by courts of equity. Equity will not relieve against any defect, imperfection, or abuse of the law itself, but only against the unconscionable claims and abuses of the parties. Courts of equity can give no different construction to the law, whether written, or customary, from that which must govern courts of law. They are equally bound by precedents with courts of law. Courts of equity afford relief in regard to those rights, recognized by the jurisprudence of the state, where the remedy at law is doubtful, inadequate, or incomplete.

§ 35-37. The administration of equity jurisprudence is more perfect in those states, other things being equal, where it is intrusted to courts exclusively devoted to that department of municipal law.]

§ 1. In treating of the subject of equity, it is material to distinguish the various senses in which that word is used. For it cannot be disguised, that an imperfect notion of what, in England, constitutes equity jurisprudence, is not only common among those who are not bred to the profession, but that it has often led to mistakes and confusion in professional treatises on the subject. In the most general sense, we are accustomed to call that equity,

which, in human transactions, is founded in natural justice, in honesty and right, and which properly arises *ex æquo et bono*. In this sense it answers precisely to the definition of justice, or natural law, as given by Justinian in the Pandects. “*Justitia est constans et perpetua voluntas jus suum cuique tribuendi. Jus pluribus modis dicitur. Uno modo, cum id quod semper æquum et bonum, jus dicitur; ut est jus naturale. Juris præcepta sunt hæc; honeste vivere, alterum non lædere, suum cuique tribuere.*”¹ And the word *jus* is used in the same sense in the Roman law, when it is declared, that *jus est ars boni et æqui*,² where it means, what we are accustomed to call, jurisprudence.³

§ 2. Now, it would be a great mistake to suppose that equity, as administered in England or America, embraced a jurisdiction so wide and extensive, as that which arises from the principles of natural justice above stated. Probably the jurisprudence of no civilized nation ever attempted so wide a range of duties for any of its judicial tribunals. Even the Roman law, which has been justly thought to deal to a vast extent in matters *ex æquo et bono*, never affected so bold a design.⁴ On the contrary, it left many matters of natural justice wholly unprovided for, from the difficulty of framing any general rules to meet them, and from the doubtful nature of the policy of attempting to give a legal sanction to duties of imperfect obligation, such as charity, gratitude, and kindness, or even to positive engagements of parties, where they are not founded in what constitutes a meritorious consideration.⁵ Thus, it is well known, that in the Roman law, as well as

¹ Dig. Lib. 1, tit. 1, l. 10, 11.

² Dig. Lib. 1, tit. 1, l. 1.

³ Grotius, after referring to the Greek word, used to signify equity, says, *Latinis autem æqui prudentia vertitur, quæ se ita ad æquitatem habet, ut jurisprudentia ad justitiam.* Grotius de *Æquitate*, ch. 1, § 4. This distinction is more refined, than solid, as the citation in the text shows. See also Taylor's *Elements of the Civil Law*, p. 90 to 98. Cicero, *Topic*. § 2; *II. ad Heren.* 13; *III. ad Heren.* 2. Bracton has referred to the various senses in which *jus* is used. Item (says he), *jus quandoque ponitur pro jure naturali, quod semper bonum et æquum est; quandoque pro jure civili tantum; quandoque pro jure prætorio tantum; quandoque pro eo tantum, quod competit ex sententiâ.* Bracton, *Lib.* 1, ch. 4, p. 3. See Dr. Taylor's definition of *lex* and *jus*. *Elem. Civ. Law*, p. 147, 148; *id.* 178; *id.* 40 to 43; *id.* 55, 56; *id.* 91.

⁴ See Heinecc. *Hist. Edit.* L. 1, ch. 6; *De Edictis Prætorum*, § 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; *id.* § 18, 21 to 30; *De Lolme on Eng. Const.* B. 1, ch. 11.

⁵ Ayliffe, *Pand. B.* 4, tit. 1, p. 420, &c.; 1 *Kames, Equity, Introd.* p. 3; *Francis, Maxims, Introd.* p. 5, 6, 7.

in the common law, there are many pacts, or promises of parties (*nude pacts*), which produce no legal obligation, capable of enforcement *in foro externo*; but which are left to be disposed of *in foro conscientiae* only.¹ “Cum nulla subest causa propter conventionem, hic constat non posse constitui obligationem. Igitur nuda pactio obligationem non parit.”² And again: “Qui autem promisit sine causa, condicere quantitatem non potest, quam non dedit, sed ipsam obligationem.”³ And hence the settled distinction, in that law, between natural obligations, upon which no action lay, but which were merely binding in conscience, and civil obligations, which gave origin to actions.⁴ The latter were sometimes called just, because of their perfect obligation in a civil sense; the former merely equitable, because of their imperfect obligation. “Et justum appellatur” (says Wolfius) “quicquid fit secundum jus perfectum alterius; æquum vero quod secundum imperfectum.”⁵ Cicero has alluded to the double sense of the word *equity*, in this very connection. “Æquitatis” (says he) “autem vis est duplex; cujus altera directi, et veri, et justī, ut dicitur, æqui et boni ratione defenditur; altera ad vicissitudinem referendæ gratiæ pertinet; quod in beneficio gratia, in injuria ultio nominatur.”⁶ It is scarcely necessary to add, that it is not in this latter sense, any more than in the broad and general sense above stated, which Ayliffe has, with great propriety, denominated *Natural Equity*, because it depends on and is supported by natural reason, that equity is spoken of, as a branch of English jurisprudence. The latter falls appropriately under the head of *Civil Equity*, as defined by the same author, being deduced from and governed by such civil maxims, as are adopted by any particular state or community.⁷

§ 3. But there is a more limited sense in which the term is often used, and which has the sanction of jurists in ancient, as well as in modern times, and belongs to the language of common life, as well as to that of juridical discussions. The sense, here alluded to, is that in which it is used in contradistinction to strict law, or

¹ Ayliffe, Pand. B. 4, tit. 2, p. 424, 425; 1 Domat, Civ. Law, B. 1, tit. 1, § 5, art. 1, 6, 9, 13.

² Dig. Lib. 2, tit. 14, l. 7, § 4.

³ Dig. Lib. 12, tit. 7, l. 1.

⁴ Ayliffe, Pand. B. 4, tit. 1, p. 420, 421.

⁵ Wolff, Instit. Jur. Nat. et Gent. P. 1, ch. 3, § 83.

⁶ Cic. Orat. Part. § 37.

⁷ Ayliffe, Pand. B. 1, tit. 7, p. 37.

strictum et summum jus. Thus, Aristotle has defined the very nature of equity to be the correction of the law, wherein it is defective by reason of its universality.¹ The same sense is repeatedly recognized in the Pandects. "In omnibus quidem, maxime tamen in jure, æquitas spectanda sit. Quotiens æquitas, desiderii naturalis ratio, aut dubitatio juris moratur, justis decretis res temperanda. Placuit in omnibus rebus præcipuam esse justitiæ æquitatisque, quam stricti juris rationem."² Grotius and Pufendorf have both adopted the definition of Aristotle; and it has found its way, with approbation, into the treatises of most of the modern authors, who have discussed the subject.³

§ 4. In the Roman jurisprudence we may see many traces of this doctrine, applied to the purpose of supplying the defects of the customary law, as well as to correct and measure the interpretation of the written and positive code. Domat accordingly, lays it down, as a general principle of the civil law, that if any case should happen, which is not regulated by some express or written

¹ Arist. Ethic. Nicom. L. 5, ch. 14, cited 1 Wooddes. (Lect. vii.) p. 193; Taylor, Elem. of Civ. Law, p. 91, 92, 93; Francis, Maxims, 3; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, § 2, p. 5, note (e). Cicero, speaking of Galba, says, that he was accustomed, *Multa pro æquitate contra jus dicere*. Cic. de Oratore, Lib. 1, § 57. See also other passages cited in Taylor's Elem. of the Civ. Law, 90, 91. Bracton defines *equity*, as contradistinguished from law (*jus*), thus: *Æquitas autem est rerum convenientia, quæ in paribus causis paria desiderat jura, et omnia bene cõsequiparat; et dicitur æquitas, quasi æqualitas*. Bracton, Lib. 1, ch. 4, § 5, p. 3.

² Dig. Lib. 50, tit. 17, l. 85, 90; Cod. Lib. 3, tit. 1, l. 8.

³ Grotius de *Æquitate*, ch. 1, § 3; Pufend. *Law of Nature and Nat. B. 5*, ch. 12, § 21, and Barbeyrac's note (1); 1 Black. Comm. 61; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 193; Bac. De Aug. Scient. Lib. 8, ch. 3, Aphor. 32, 35, 45. Grotius says: *Proprie vero et singulariter æquitas est virtus voluntatis, correctrix ejus, quo lex propter universalitatem deficit*. Grotius de *Æquitate*, ch. 1, § 2. *Æquum est id ipsum, quo lex corrigitur*. Id. Dr. Taylor has with great force paraphrased the language of Aristotle. That part of unwritten law, says he, which is called *Equity* or *ῥῶ ἐπιεικὲς*, is a species of justice distinct from what is written. It must happen either against the design and inclination of the law-giver, or with his consent. In the former case, for instance, when several particular facts must escape his knowledge; in the other, when he may be apprised of them, indeed, but by reason of their variety is not willing to recite them. For, if a case admits of an infinite variety of circumstances, and a law must be made, that law must be conceived in general terms. Taylor Elem. Civ. Law, 92. And of this infirmity in all laws, the Pandects give open testimony. *Non possunt omnes articuli singillatim aut legibus, aut senatus consultis comprehendi; sed cum in aliqua causa sententia eorum manifesta est, is qui jurisdictioni præest, ad similia procedere, atque ita jus dicere debet*. Dig. L. 1, tit. 3, l. 12; id. l. 10.

law, it should have for a law the natural principles of equity, which is the universal law, extending to everything.¹ And for this he founds himself upon certain texts in the Pandects, which present the formulary in a very imposing generality. "Hæc æquitas suggerit, etsi jure deficiamus," is the reason given for allowing one person to restore a bank or dam in the lands of another, which may be useful to him, and not injurious to the other.²

§ 5. The jurisdiction of the Prætor doubtless had its origin in this application of equity, as contradistinguished from mere law. "Jus autem civile" (say the Pandects) "est, quod ex legibus, plebiscitis, senatus consultis, decretis principum, auctoritate prudentium venit. Jus prætorium est, quod Prætores introduxerunt, adjuvandi, vel supplendi, vel corrigendi juris civilis gratiâ, propter utilitatem publicam; quod et honorarium dicitur, ad honorem prætorum sic nominatum."³ But, broad and general as this language is, we should be greatly deceived, if it were to be supposed, that even the Prætor's power extended to the direct overthrow or disregard of the positive law. He was bound to stand by that law in all cases, to which it was justly applicable, according to the maxim of the Pandects, "Quod quidem perquam durum est; set ita lex scripta est."⁴

¹ Domat, Prel. Book, tit. 1, § 1, art. 23. See also Ayliffe, Pand. B. 1, tit. 7, p. 38.

² Dig. Lib. 39, tit. 3, l. 2, § 5. Domat cites other texts not perhaps quite so stringent; such as Dig. Lib. 27, tit. 1, l. 13, § 7; Id. Lib. 47, tit. 20, l. 7. Dr. Taylor has given many texts to the same purpose. Elem. Civ. Law, p. 90, 91. There was a known distinction in the Roman law on this subject. Where a right was founded in the express words of the law, the actions grounded on it were denominated *Actiones Directæ*; where they arose upon a benignant extension of the words of the law to other cases, not within the terms, but within what we should call the equity of the law, they were denominated *Actiones Utiles*. Taylor, Elem. Civ. Law, 93.

³ Dig. Lib. 1, tit. 1, l. 7; id. tit. 3, l. 10. Sed et eas actiones, quæ legibus proditæ sunt (say the Pandects) si lex justa ac necessaria sit, supplet Prætor in eo, quod legi deest. Dig. Lib. 19, tit. 5, l. 11. Heineccius, speaking of the Prætor's authority, says: His Edictis multa innovata, adjuvandi, supplendi, corrigendi juris civilis gratia, obtentuque utilitatis publicæ. 1 Heinecc. Elem. Pand. P. 1, Lib. 1, § 42.

⁴ Dig. Lib. 40, tit. 9, l. 12, § 1. See also 3 Black. Comm. 430, 431; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 192 to 200. Dr. Taylor (Elem. Civ. Law, p. 214) has therefore observed, that, for this reason, this branch of the Roman law was not reckoned as part of the *jus civile scriptum* by Papinian, but stands in opposition to it. And thus, as we distinguish between common law and equity, there were

§ 6. But a more general way in which this sense of equity, as contradistinguished from mere law, or *strictum jus*, is applied, is, to the interpretation and limitation of the words of positive or written laws: by construing them, not according to the letter, but according to the reason and spirit of them.¹ Mr. Justice Blackstone has alluded to this sense of his Commentaries, where he says: "From this method of interpreting laws by the reason of them arises what we call equity;"² and more fully in another place, where he says: "Equity, in its true and genuine meaning, is the soul and spirit of all law; positive law is construed, and rational law is made by it. In this, equity is synonymous with justice; in that, to the true and sound interpretation of the rule."³

§ 7. In this sense equity must have a place in every rational system of jurisprudence, if not in name, at least in substance.⁴

with that people *actiones civiles et prætoris, et obligationes civiles, et prætoris*. The Prætor was therefore called *Custos, non conditor juris*; *judicia exercere potuit*; *jus facere non potuit*; *dicendi, non condendi juris potestatem habuit*; *juvare, supplere, interpretari, mitigare jus civile potuit*; *mutare vel tollere non potest*. The prætorian edicts are not properly law, though they may operate like law. And Cicero, speaking of contracts *bonæ fidei*, says, in allusion to the same jurisdiction: In his *magni esse judicis statuere* (*præsertim cum in plerisque essent judicia contraria*), *quid quemque cuique præstare oporteret*; that is, he should decide according to equity and conscience. *Cic. de Officiis, Lib. 3, cap. 17*. Dr. Taylor has, in another part of his work, gone at large into equity and its various meanings in the civil law. Taylor, *Elem. of Civil Law*, 90 to 98.

¹ Plowden, *Comm.* p. 465, 466.

² 1 *Black. Comm.* p. 61, 62.

³ 3 *Black. Comm.* p. 429. See also Taylor *Elem. Civ. Law*, p. 96, 97; Plowden *Comm.* p. 465, Reporter's note. Dr. Taylor has observed, that the great difficulty is, to distinguish between that equity, which is required in all law whatsoever, and which makes a very important and a very necessary branch of the *jus scriptum*; and that equity, which is opposed to written and positive law, and stands in contradistinction to it. Taylor, *Elem. Civ. Law*, p. 90.

⁴ See 1 *Fonbl. Equity*, B. 1, § 3, p. 24, note (h); Plowden, *Comm.* p. 465, 466. Lord Bacon said in his *Argument on the jurisdiction of the Marches*, there is no law under heaven which is not supplied with equity; for *summum jus summa injuria*; or as some have it, *summa lex summa crux*. And, therefore, all nations have equity. 4 *Bac. Works*, p. 274. Plowden, in his note to his *Reports*, dwells much (p. 465, 466) on the nature of equity in the interpretation of statutes, saying, *Ratio legis est anima legis*. And it is a common maxim in the law of England, that *Apices juris non sunt jura*. *Branch's Maxims*, p. 12; *Co. Litt.* 304 (b).

It is impossible that any code, however minute and particular, should embrace or provide for the infinite variety of human affairs, or should furnish rules applicable to all of them. "Neque leges neque senatus consulta ita scribi possunt" (says the Digest) ut omnes casus, qui quandoque inciderint, comprehendantur; sed sufficit ea, quæ plerumque accidunt, contineri."¹ Every system of laws must necessarily be defective; and cases must occur, to which the antecedent rules cannot be applied without injustice, or to which they cannot be applied at all. It is the office, therefore, of a judge to consider whether the antecedent rule does apply, or ought, according to the intention of the law-giver, to apply to a given case; and if there are two rules, nearly approaching to it, but of opposite tendency, which of them ought to govern it; and if there exists no rule applicable to all the circumstances, whether the party should be remediless, or whether the rule furnishing the closest analogy ought to be followed. The general words of a law may embrace all cases; and yet it may be clear, that all could not have been intentionally embraced; for if they were, the obvious objects of the legislation might or would be defeated. So, words of a doubtful import may be used in a law, or words susceptible of a more enlarged, or of a more restricted meaning, or of two meanings equally appropriate.² The question, in all such cases, must be, in what sense the words are designed to be used; and it is the part of a judge to look to the objects of the legislature, and to give such a construction to the words, as will best further those objects. This is an exercise of the power of equitable interpretation. It is the administration of equity, as contradistinguished from a strict adherence to the

¹ Dig. Lib. 1, tit. 3, l. 10.

² It is very easy to see from what sources Mr. Charles Butler drew his own statement (manifestly, as a description of English equity jurisprudence, incorrect, as Professor Park has shown), "that equity, as distinguished from law, arises from the inability of human foresight to establish any rule, which, however salutary in general, is not, in some particular cases, evidently unjust and oppressive, and operates beyond, or in opposition to its intent, &c. The grand reason for the interference of a court of equity is, that the imperfection of the legal remedy, in consequence of the universality of legislative provisions, may be redressed." 1 Butler's Reminisc. 37, 38, 39; Park's Introd. Lect. 5, 6. Now, Aristotle, or Cicero, or a Roman Prætor, or a Continental Jurist, or a Publicist of modern Europe might have used these expressions, as a description of general equity; but it would have given no just idea of equity, as administered under the municipal jurisprudence of England.

mere letter of the law. Hence arises a variety of rules of interpretation of laws, according to their nature and operation, whether they are remedial, or are penal laws; whether they are restrictive of general right, or in advancement of public justice or policy; whether they are of universal application, or of a private and circumscribed intent. But this is not the place to consider the nature or application of those rules.¹

§ 8. It is of this equity, as correcting, mitigating, or interpreting the law, that, not only civilians, but common-law writers, are most accustomed to speak;² and thus many persons are misled into the false notion, that this is the real and peculiar duty of courts of equity, in England and America. St. Germain, after alluding to the general subject of equity, says: "In some cases it is necessary to leave the words of the law, and to follow that reason and justice requireth, and to that intent equity is ordained, that is to say, to temper and mitigate the rigor of the law, &c.

¹ See Grotius de Jure Belli ac Pacis, Lib. 3, ch. 20, § 47, p. 1, 2; Grotius de Æquitate, ch. 1. This paragraph is copied very closely from the article *Equity*, in Dr. Lieber's Encyclopædia Americana, a license which has not appropriated another person's labors. There will be found many excellent rules of interpretation of Laws in Rutherford's Institutes of Natural Law, B. 2, ch. 7; in Bacon's Abridgment, title *Statute*; in Domat on the Civil Law (Prelim. Book, tit. 1, § 2); and in 1 Black. Comm. Introduction, p. 58 to 62.

There are yet other senses, in which equity is used, which might be brought before the reader. The various senses are elaborately collected by Oldendorpius, in his work de Jure et Æquitate Disputatio; and he finally offers, what he deems a very exact definition of equity, in its general sense. *Æquitas est judicium animi, ex vera ratione petitur, de circumstantiis rerum, ad honestatem vitæ pertinentium, cum incidunt, recte discernens, quid fieri aut non fieri oporteat.* This seems but another name for a system of ethics. Grotius has, in one short paragraph (De Æquitate, ch. 1, § 2), brought together the different senses in a clear and exact manner. Et ut de æquitate primum loquamur, scire oportet, æquitatem aut æquum de omni interdum jure dici, ut cum jurisprudentia ars boni et æquidicitur; interdum de jure naturali absolute, ut cum Cicero ait, jus legibus, moribus, et æquitate constare; alias vero de hisce rebus, quas lex non exacte definit, sed arbitrio viri boni permittit. Sæpe etiam de jure aliquo civili proprius ad jus naturale accedente, idque respectu alterius juris, quod paulo longius recedere videtur, ut jus Prætorium et quædam jurisprudentiæ interpretationes. Proprie vero et singulariter æquitas est virtus voluntatis, correctrix ejus, in quo lex propter universalitatem deficit.

² Merlin Répertoire, *Équité*. Grounds and Rudim. of the Law (attributed sometimes to Francis), p. 3, 5, edit. 1751; 1 Fonbl. Equity, B. 1 ch. 1, § 2, note (e); 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 192 to 200; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 1, tit. 3, art. 4, § 11 to 27.

And so it appeareth, that equity taketh not away the very right, but only that that seemeth not to be right, by the general words of the law.”¹ And then he goes on to suggest the other kind of equity, as administered in chancery, to ascertain “whether the plaintiff hath title in conscience to recover or not.”² And, in another place, he states: “Equity is a rightwiseness, that considereth all the particular circumstances of the deed, which is also tempered with the sweetness of mercy.”³ Another learned author lays down doctrines equally broad. “As *summum jus* (says he), *summa est injuria*, as it cannot consider circumstances; and as this (equity) takes in all the circumstances of the case, and judges of the whole matter according to good conscience, this shows both the use and excellence of equity above any prescribed law.” Again: “Equity is that which is commonly called equal, just, and good; and is a mitigation or moderation of the common law, in some circumstances, either of the matter, person, or time; and often it dispenseth with the law itself.”⁴ “The matters, of which equity holdeth cognizance in its absolute power, are such as are not remediable at law; and of them the sorts may be said to be as infinite, almost, as the different affairs conversant in human life.”⁵ And, he adds, that “equity is so extensive and various, that every particular case in equity may be truly said to stand upon its own particular circumstances; and, therefore, under favor, I apprehend precedents not of that great use in equity, as some would contend; but that equity thereby may possibly be made too much a science for good conscience.”⁶

§ 9. This description of equity differs in nothing essential from that given by Grotius and Pufendorf,⁷ as a definition of general equity, as contradistinguished from the equity which is recognized by the mere municipal code of a particular nation. And, indeed, it goes the full extent of embracing all things, which the law has

¹ Dialogue 1, ch. 16.

² Id. 1 ch. 17.

³ Id. ch. 16.

⁴ Grounds and Rudim. p. 5, 6, edit. 1751.

⁵ Id. p. 6.

⁶ Grounds and Rudim. p. 5, 6, edit. 1751. Yet Francis (or whoever else was the author) is compelled to admit, that there are many cases in which there is no relief to be had, either at law or in equity itself; but the same is left to the conscience of the party, as a greater inconvenience would thence follow to the people in general. Francis, Max. p. 5.

⁷ Grotius de *Æquitate*, ch. 1, § 3, 12; Pufend. Elem. Juris. Univ. L. 1, § 22, 23, cited 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 2, note (c), p. 6.

not exactly defined, but leaves to the arbitrary description of a judge; or, in the language of Grotius, "de hisce rebus, quas lex non exacte definit, sed arbitrio viri boni permittit."¹ So that, in this view of the matter, an English court of equity would seem to be possessed of exactly the same prerogatives and powers as belonged to the Prætor's forum in the Roman law.²

§ 10. Nor is this description of the equity jurisprudence of England confined to a few text-writers. It pervades a large class, and possesses the sanction of many high authorities. Lord Bacon more than once hints at it. In his Aphorisms he lays it down, "Habeant similiter Curiæ Prætoriæ potestatem tam subveniendi contra rigorem legis, quam supplendi defectum legis."³ And on the solemn occasion of accepting the office of chancellor, he said: Chancery is ordained to supply the law, and not to subvert the law.⁴ Finch, in his Treatise on the Law, says, that the nature of equity is to amplify, enlarge, and add to the letter of the law.⁵ In the Treatise of Equity, attributed to Mr. Ballow, and deservedly held in high estimation, language exceedingly broad is held on this subject. After remarking, that there will be a necessity of having recourse to the natural principles, that what is wanting to the finite may be supplied out of that which is infinite; and that this is properly what is called equity, in opposition to strict law, he proceeds to state: "And thus in chancery, every particular case stands upon its own circumstances; and although the common law will not decree against the general rule of law, yet chancery doth, so as the example introduce not a general mischief. Every matter, therefore, that happens inconsistent with the design of the legislator, or is contrary to natural justice, may find relief here. For no man can be obliged to any thing contrary to the law of nature; and indeed no man in his senses can be presumed willing to oblige another to it."⁶

¹ Grotius de *Æquitate*, ch. 1, § 2; 1 Fonbl. Equity, B. 1, ch. 1, § 2 note (e).

² Dig. Lib. 1, tit. 1, l. 7. See also Heinecc. De Edict. Prætorum, Lib. 1, ch. 6, § 8 to 13; id. § 18 to 30; Dr. Taylor's Elem. Civ. Law, 213 to 216; id. 92, 93; De Lolme on Eng. Const. B. 1, ch. 11. Lord Kames does not hesitate to say, that the powers assumed by our courts of equity are in effect the same that were assumed by the Roman Prætor from necessity, without any express authority. 1 Kames Eq. Introd. 19.

³ Bac. De. Aug. Scient. Lib. 8, ch. 3, Aphor. 35, 45.

⁴ Bac. Speech. 4; Bac. Works, 488.

⁵ Finch's Law, p. 20.

⁶ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3. The author of *Eunomus* describes the original

§ 11. The Author has, indeed, qualified these propositions with the suggestion: "But if the law has determined a matter with all its circumstances, equity cannot intermeddle." But, even with this qualification, the propositions are not maintainable, in the equity jurisprudence of England, in the general sense in which they are stated. For example, the first proposition, that equity will relieve against a general rule of law, is (as has been justly observed) neither sanctioned by principle nor by authority.¹ For, though it may be true that equity has, in many cases, decided differently from courts of law, yet it will be found that these cases involved circumstances to which a court of law would not advert; but which, in point of substantial justice, were deserving of particular consideration; and which a court of equity, proceeding on principles of substantial justice, felt itself bound to respect.²

§ 12. Mr. Justice Blackstone has taken considerable pains to refute this doctrine. "It is said" (he remarks) "that it is the business of a court of equity, in England, to abate the rigor of the common law."³ But no such power is contended for. Hard was the case of bond creditors, whose debtor devised away his real estate; rigorous and unjust the rule which put the devisee in a better condition than the heir; yet a court of equity had no power to interfere. Hard is the common law still subsisting, that land devised, or descending to the heir, should not be liable to simple contract debts of the ancestor or deviser, although the money was laid out in purchasing the very land; and that the father shall never immediately succeed as heir to the real estate of the son. But a court of equity can give no relief; though, in both these instances, the artificial reason of the law, arising from feudal principles, has long since ceased."⁴ And illustrations of the same character may be found in every State of the Union. In some States, bond debts have a privilege of priority of payment over simple contract debts, in cases of insolvent intestate estates. In others, judgments are a privileged lien on lands. In many, if not

jurisdiction of the court of chancery, as a court of equity, to be "the power of moderating the *summum jus*." Eunomus, Dial. 3, § 60.

¹ Com. Dig. Chancery, 3, F. 8.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (g); 1 Dane's Abridg. ch. 9, art. 1, § 2, 3; Kemp v. Pryor, 7 Ves. 249, 250.

³ Grounds and Rudim. p. 74 (Max. 105), edit. 1751.

⁴ 3 Black. Comm. 430. See Com. Dig. Chancery, 3, F. 8.

in all, a debtor may prefer one creditor to another, in discharging his debts, when his assets are wholly insufficient to pay all the debts. And (not to multiply instances) what can be more harsh, or indefensible, than the rule of the common law, by which a husband may receive an ample fortune in personal estate, through his wife, and by his own act, or will, strip her of every farthing, and leave her a beggar?

§ 13. A very learned judge in equity, in one of his ablest judgments, has put this matter in a very strong light.¹ “The law is clear” (said he), “and courts of equity ought to follow it in their judgments concerning titles to equitable estates; otherwise great uncertainty and confusion would ensue. And, though proceedings in equity are said to be *secundum discretionem boni viri*; yet when it is asked, “*Vir bonus est quis?*” the answer is, “*Qui consulta patrum, qui leges juraque servat.*” And, as it is said in Rook’s case (5 Rep. 99 b), that discretion is a science, not to act arbitrarily, according to men’s wills, and private affections; so, that discretion, which is executed here, is to be governed by the rules of law and equity, which are not to oppose, but each in its turn to be subservient to the other. This discretion, in some cases, follows the law implicitly; in others, assists it, and advances the remedy; in others, again, it relieves against the abuse, or allays the rigor of it. But in no case does it contradict or overturn the grounds or principles thereof, as has been sometimes ignorantly imputed to the court. That is a discretionary power which neither this nor any other court, not even the highest, acting in a judicial capacity, is by the constitution intrusted with.”²

§ 14. The next proposition, that every matter that happens inconsistent with the design of the legislator, or is contrary to natural justice, may find relief in equity, is equally untenable. There are many cases against natural justice, which are left wholly to the conscience of the party, and are without any redress, equitable or legal. And so far from a court of equity supplying universally the defects of positive legislation, or peculiarly carrying into effect the intent, as contradistinguished from the text of the legislature,

¹ Sir Joseph Jekyll, in *Cowper v. Cowper*, 2 P. Will. 753.

² Sir Thomas Clarke, in pronouncing his judgment in the case of *Burgess v. Wheate* (1 W. Black. 123), has adopted this very language, and given it his full approbation. See also 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (g). See also *Fry v. Porter*, 1 Mod. 300; *Grounds and Rudim.* p. 65 (Max. 92), edit. 1751.

it is governed by the same rules of interpretation as a court of law; and is often compelled to stop where the letter of the law stops. It is the duty of every court of justice, whether of law or of equity, to consult the intention of the legislature. And, in the discharge of this duty, a court of equity is not invested with a larger or a more liberal discretion than a court of law.¹

§ 15. Mr. Justice Blackstone has here again met the objection in a forcible manner. "It is said" (says he) "that a court of equity determines according to the spirit of the rule, and not according to the strictness of the letter. But so also does a court of law. Both, for instance, are equally bound, and equally profess to interpret statutes according to the true intent of the legislature. In general, all cases cannot be foreseen; or, if foreseen, cannot be expressed. Some will arise which will fall within the meaning, though not within the words of the legislator; and others, which may fall within the letter, may be contrary to his meaning, though not expressly excepted. These cases, thus out of the letter, are often said to be within the equity of an act of parliament; and so, cases within the letter, are frequently out of the equity. Here, by equity, we mean nothing but the sound interpretation of the law, &c., &c. But there is not a single rule of interpreting laws, whether equitably or strictly, that is not equally used by the judges in the courts both of law and equity. The construction must in both be the same; or, if they differ, it is only as one court of law may happen to differ from another. Each endeavors to fix and adopt the true sense of the law in question. Neither can enlarge, diminish, or alter that sense in a single tittle."²

§ 16. Yet it is by no means uncommon to represent, that the peculiar duty of a court of equity is to supply the defects of the common law, and next, to correct its rigor or injustice.³ Lord Kames avows this doctrine in various places, and in language singularly bold. "It appears now clearly" (says he) "that a court of equity commences at the limits of the common law, and enforces benevolence, where the law of nature makes it our duty. And thus a court of equity, accompanying the law of nature in its general refinements, enforces every natural duty that is not pro-

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, § 3, note (h).

² 3 Black. Comm. 431; 1 Dane, Abr. ch. 9, art. 3, § 3.

³ 1 Kames on Equity, B. 1, p. 40.

Justice Blackstone, addressing himself to this erroneous statement, has truly said: "The system of our courts of equity is a labored connected system, governed by established rules, and bound down by precedents, from which they do not depart, although the reason of some of them may perhaps be liable to objection, &c., &c. Nay, sometimes a precedent is so strictly followed, that a particular judgment, founded upon special circumstances, gives rise to a general rule."¹ And he afterwards adds: "The system of jurisprudence in our courts of law and equity are now equally artificial systems, founded on the same principles of justice and positive law, but varied by different usages in the forms and mode of their proceedings."² The value of precedents, and the importance of adhering to them, were deeply felt in ancient times, and nowhere more than in the Prætor's forum. "Consuetudinis autem jus esse putatur id" (says Cicero) "quod, voluntate omnium, sine lege, vetustas comprobârit. In eâ autem jura sunt, quædam ipsa jam certa propter vetustatem; quo in genere et alia sunt multa, et eorum multo maxima pars, quæ Prætores edicere

¹ 3 Black. Comm. 432, 433.

² 3 Black. 434; id. 440, 441; 1 Kent, Comm. Lect. 21, p. 489, 490 (2d edition). The value and importance of precedents in chancery were much insisted upon by Lord Keeper Bridgman, in *Fry v. Porter* (1 Mod. 300, 307). See also 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 200, 201, 202. Lord Hardwicke, in his letter to Lord Kames, on the subject of equity, in answer to the question whether a court of equity ought to be governed by any general rules, said: "Some general rules there ought to be; for otherwise the great inconvenience of *jus vagum et incertum* will follow. And yet the Prætor must not be so absolutely and invariably bound by them, as the judges are by the rules of the common law. For if they were so bound, the consequence would follow, which you very judiciously state, that he must sometimes pronounce decrees which would be materially unjust; since no rule can be equally just in the application to a whole class of cases, that are far from being the same in every circumstance." (Parke's Hist. of Chancery, p. 501, 506.) This is very loosely said; and the reason given equally applies to every general rule; for there can be none, which will be found equally just in its application to all cases. If every change of circumstances is to change the rule in equity, there can be no general rule. Every case must stand upon its own ground. Yet courts of equity now adhere as closely to general rules as courts of law. Each expounds its rules to meet new cases; but each is equally reluctant to depart from them upon slight inconveniences and mischiefs. See Mitford, Plead. in Eq. p. 4, note (b); 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (k). The late Professor Park, of King's College, (London), has made some very acute remarks on this whole subject, in his Introductory Lecture on Equity (1832).

consuêrunt.”¹ And the Pandects directly recognize the same doctrine. “Est enim juris civilis species *consuetudo*; enimvero, Diuturna consuetudo pro jure et lege, in his, quæ non ex scripto descendunt observari, solet, &c. Maxime autem probatur consuetudo ex rebus judicatis.”²

§ 19. If, indeed, a court of equity in England did possess the unbounded jurisdiction, which has been thus generally ascribed to it, of correcting, controlling, moderating, and even superseding the law, and of enforcing all the rights, as well as the charities, arising from natural law and justice, and of freeing itself from all regard to former rules and precedents, it would be the most gigantic in its sway, and the most formidable instrument of arbitrary power, that could well be devised. It would literally place the whole rights and property of the community under the arbitrary will of the judge, acting, if you please, *arbitrio boni judicis*, and, it may be, *ex æquo et bono*, according to his own notions and conscience; but still acting with a despotic and sovereign authority. A court of chancery might then well deserve the spirited rebuke of Selden: “For law we have a measure, and know what to trust to. Equity is according to the conscience of him that is chancellor; and as that is larger, or narrower, so is equity. ’Tis all one as if they should make the standard for the measure the chancellor’s foot. What an uncertain measure would this be? One chancellor has a long foot; another a short foot; a third an indifferent foot. It is the same thing with the chancellor’s conscience.”³ And notions of this sort were, in former ages, when the chancery jurisdiction was opposed with vehement disapprobation by common lawyers, very industriously propagated by the most learned of English antiquarians, such as Spelman, Coke, Lambard, and Selden.⁴ We might, indeed, under such circumstances, adopt the language of Mr. Justice Blackstone, and say: “In short, if a court of equity in England did really act, as many ingenious writers have supposed it (from theory) to do, it would rise above all law, either common or statute, and be a most arbi-

¹ Cicero de Invent. Lib. 2, cap. 22. My attention was first called to these passages by a note of Lord Redesdale. Mitford, Plead. in Eq. p. 4, note (b). See Heineccius De Edictis Prætorum, Lib. 1, cap. 6, § 13, 30.

² Pothier, Pand. Lib. 1, tit. 3, art. 6, n. 28, 29; Dig. Lib. 1, tit. 3, l. 33, l. 34.

³ Selden’s Table Talk, title, *Equity*; 3 Black. Comm. 432, note (y).

⁴ See citations, 3 Black. Comm. 433; id. 54, 55; id. 440, 441.

well defined, and whose decrees were not capable of being resisted, it would not be unnatural, that they should arrogate to themselves the general attributes of royalty, and interpose in many cases, which seemed to them to require a remedy, more wide or more summary than was adopted by the common courts of law.

§ 22. This is the view which Mr. Justice Blackstone seems to have taken of the matter; who has observed, that, in the infancy of our courts of equity, before their jurisdiction was settled, the chancellors themselves, "partly from their ignorance of the law (being frequently bishops or statesmen), partly from ambition and lust of power (encouraged by the arbitrary principles of the age they lived in), but principally from the narrow and unjust decisions of the courts of law, had arrogated to themselves such unlimited authority, as hath totally been disclaimed by their successors, for now (1765) above a century past. The decrees of the court of equity, were then rather in the nature of awards, formed on the sudden, *pro re natâ*, with more probity of intention, than knowledge of the subject, founded on no settled principles, as being never designed, and therefore never used, as precedents."¹

§ 23. It was fortunate, indeed, that, even in those early times, the knowledge which the ecclesiastical chancellors had acquired of general equity and justice from the civil law, enabled them to administer them with a more sound discretion than could otherwise have been done. And from the moment, when principles of decision came to be acted upon and established in chancery, the Roman law furnished abundant principles to erect a superstructure, at once solid, convenient, and lofty, adapted to human wants, and enriched by all the aids of human wisdom, experience, and learning. To say that later chancellors have borrowed much from these materials, is to bestow the highest praise upon their judgment, their industry, and their reverential regard to their duty. It would have been little to the commendation of such learned minds, that they had studiously disregarded the maxims of ancient wisdom, or had neglected to use them, from ignorance, from pride, or from indifference.²

¹ 3 Black. Comm. 433; id. 440, 441.

² The whole of the late Professor Park's Lecture upon Equity Jurisprudence, delivered in King's College in Nov. 1831, on this subject, is well deserving of a perusal by every student. There is much freedom and force in his observations;

§ 24. Having dwelt thus far upon the inaccurate, or inadequate notions, which are frequently circulated, as to equity jurisprudence, in England and America, it may be thought proper to give some more exact and clear statement of it. This may be better done by explanatory observations, than by direct definitions, which are often said in the law to be perilous and unsatisfactory.

§ 25. In England and in the American States, which have derived their jurisprudence from that parental source, equity has a restrained and qualified meaning. The remedies for the redress of wrongs, and for the enforcement of rights, are distinguished into two classes: first, those which are administered in courts of common law; and secondly, those which are administered in courts of equity. Rights, which are recognized and protected, and wrongs, which are redressed, by the former courts, are called legal rights and legal injuries. Rights, which are recognized and protected, and wrongs, which are redressed by the latter courts only, are called equitable rights and equitable injuries. The former are said to be rights and wrongs at common law, and the remedies, therefore are remedies at common law; the latter are said to be rights and wrongs in equity, and the remedies, therefore, are remedies in equity. Equity jurisprudence may, therefore, properly be said to be that portion of remedial justice, which is exclusively administered by a court of equity, as contradistinguished from that portion of remedial justice, which is exclusively administered by a court of common law.

§ 26. The distinction between the former and the latter courts may be further illustrated by considering the different natures of the rights they are designed to recognize and protect, the different natures of the remedies which they apply, and the different natures of the forms and modes of proceeding which they adopt, to accomplish their respective ends. In the courts of common law, both of England and America, there are certain prescribed

and if his life had been longer spared, he would probably have been a leader in a more masculine and extensive course of law studies by the English Bar. There are also two excellent articles on the same subject in the *American Jurist*, one of which, published in 1829, contains a most elaborate review and vindication of the jurisdiction of courts of equity; and the other in 1833, a forcible exposition of the prevalent errors on the subject (2 *Amer. Jurist*, 314; 10 *Amer. Jurist*, 227). I know not where to refer the reader to pages more full of useful comment and research.

forms of action, to which the party must resort to furnish him a remedy; and, if there be no prescribed form to reach such a case, he is remediless; for they entertain jurisdiction only of certain actions, and give relief according to the particular exigency of such actions, and not otherwise. In those actions, a general and unqualified judgment only can be given, for the plaintiff, or for the defendant, without any adaptation of it to particular circumstances.

§ 27. But there are many cases, in which a simple judgment for either party, without qualifications, or conditions, or peculiar arrangements, will not do entire justice *ex æquo et bono* to either party. Some modifications of the rights of both parties may be required; some restraints on one side, or on the other, or perhaps on both sides; some adjustments involving reciprocal obligations, or duties; some compensatory or preliminary, or concurrent proceedings to fix, control, or equalize rights; some qualifications or conditions, present or future, temporary or permanent, to be annexed to the exercise of rights, or the redress of injuries. In all these cases courts of common law cannot give the desired relief. They have no forms of remedy adapted to the objects. They can entertain suits only in a prescribed form, and they can give a general judgment only in the prescribed form. From their very character and organization they are incapable of the remedy, which the mutual rights and relative situations of the parties, under the circumstances, positively require.

§ 28. But courts of equity are not so restrained. Although they have prescribed forms of proceeding, the latter are flexible, and may be suited to the different postures of cases. They may adjust their decrees, so as to meet most, if not all, of these exigencies; and they may vary, qualify, restrain, and model the remedy, so as to suit it to mutual and adverse claims, controlling equities, and the real and substantial rights of all the parties. Nay, more: they can bring before them all parties interested in the subject-matter, and adjust the rights of all, however numerous; whereas, courts of common law are compelled to limit their inquiry to the very parties in the litigation before them, although other persons may have the deepest interest in the event of the suit. So that one of the most striking and distinctive features of

¹ Mitford on Plead. p. 3, 4; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 203 to 206.

courts of equity is, that they can adapt their decrees to all the varieties of circumstances, which may arise, and adjust them to all the peculiar rights of all the parties in interest; whereas courts of common law (as we have already seen) are bound down to a fixed and invariable form of judgment in general terms, altogether absolute, for the plaintiff, or for the defendant.¹

§ 29. Another peculiarity of courts of equity is, that they can administer remedies for rights, which rights, courts of common law do not recognize at all; or, if they do recognize them, they leave them wholly to the conscience and good-will of the parties. Thus, what are technically called Trusts, that is, estates vested in persons upon particular trusts and confidences, are wholly without any cognizance at the common law; and the abuses of such trusts and confidences are beyond the reach of any legal process. But they are cognizable in courts of equity; and hence they are called equitable estates; and an ample remedy is there given in favor of the *cestuis que trust* (the parties beneficially interested) for all wrongs and injuries, whether arising from negligence, or positive misconduct.² There are also many cases (as we shall presently see) of losses and injuries by mistake, accident, and fraud; many cases of penalties and forfeitures; many cases of impending irreparable injuries, or meditated mischiefs; and many cases of oppressive proceedings, undue advantages and impositions, betrayals of confidence, and unconscionable bargains; in all of which courts of equity will interfere and grant redress; but which the common law takes no notice of, or silently disregards.³

§ 30. Again: the remedies in courts of equity are often very different, in their nature, mode, and degree, from those of courts

¹ 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 203 to 206; 3 Black. Comm. 438. Much of this paragraph has been abstracted from Dr. Lieber's *Encyclopædia Americana*, article *Equity*. The late Professor Park, of King's College, London, in his *Introductory Lecture on Equity* (1831, p. 15), has said, "The editors of the *Encyclopædia Americana* have stated the real case, with regard to what we call courts of equity, much more accurately than I can find it stated in any English Law Books;" and he thus admits the propriety of the exposition contained in the text.

² 3 Black. Comm. 439; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 209 to 213; 2 Fonbl. *Equity*, B. 2, ch. 1, § 1; id. ch. 7; id. ch. 8.

³ 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 203, 204; 3 Black. Comm. 434, 435, 438, 439; 1 Fonbl. *Eq. B.* 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*).

of common law, even when each has a jurisdiction over the same subject-matter. Thus, a court of equity, if a contract is broken, will often compel the party specifically to perform the contract; whereas courts of law can only give damages for the breach of it. So, courts of equity will interfere by way of injunction to prevent wrongs; whereas, courts of common law can grant redress only, when the wrong is done.¹

§ 31. The modes of seeking and granting relief in equity are also different from those of courts of common law. The latter proceed to the trial of contested facts by means of a jury; and the evidence is generally to be drawn, not from the parties, but from third persons, who are disinterested witnesses. But courts of equity try causes without a jury; and they address themselves to the conscience of the defendant, and require him to answer upon his oath the matters of fact stated in the bill, if they are within his knowledge; and he is compellable to give a full account of all such facts, with all their circumstances, without evasion, or equivocation; and the testimony of other witnesses also may be taken to confirm, or to refute, the facts so alleged.² Indeed, every bill in equity may be said to be, in some sense, a bill of discovery, since it asks for the personal oath of the defendant, to purge himself in regard to the transactions stated in the bill. It may readily be perceived, how very important this process of discovery may be, when we consider how great the mass of human transactions is, in which there are no other witnesses, or persons, having knowledge thereof, except the parties themselves.

§ 32. Mr. Justice Blackstone has, in a few words, given an outline of some of the more important powers and peculiar duties of courts of equity. He says, that they are established "to detect latent frauds, and concealments, which the process of courts of law is not adapted to reach; to enforce the execution of such matters of trust and confidence, as are binding in conscience, though not cognizable in a court of law; to deliver from such dangers as are owing to misfortune or oversight; and to give a

¹ 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 206, 207. [* By a late English statute, the superior courts of common law in Westminster Hall are authorized to issue writs of injunction, both interlocutory and final, as well as most other writs calculated to enforce specific relief. Common Law Procedure Act, 1845 and 1852. Redfield on Railways, § 222, p. 512.]

² 3 Black. Comm. 437, 438; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 207.

more specific relief, and more adapted to the circumstances of the case, than can always be obtained by the generality of the rules of the positive or common law."¹ But the general account of Lord Redesdale (which he admits, however, to be imperfect, and in some respects inaccurate), is far more satisfactory, as a definite enumeration. "The jurisdiction of a court of equity" (says he),² "when it assumes a power of decision, is to be exercised, (1.) where the principles of law, by which the ordinary courts are guided, give a right, but the powers of those courts are not sufficient to afford a complete remedy, or their modes of proceeding are inadequate to the purpose; (2.) where the courts of ordinary jurisdiction are made instruments of injustice; (3.) where the principles of law, by which the ordinary courts are guided, give no right, but upon the principles of universal justice, the interference of the judicial power is necessary to prevent a wrong, and the positive law is silent. And it may also be collected, that courts of equity, without deciding upon the rights of the parties, administer to the ends of justice by assuming a jurisdiction; (4.) to remove impediments to the fair decision of a question in other courts; (5.) to provide for the safety of property in dispute, pending a litigation, and to preserve property in danger of being dissipated or destroyed by those to whose care it is by law intrusted, or by persons having immediate but partial interests; (6.) to restrain the assertion of doubtful rights in a manner productive of irreparable damage; (7.) to prevent injury to a third person by the doubtful title of others; and (8.) to put a bound to vexatious and oppressive litigation, and to prevent multiplicity of suits. And further, that courts of equity, without pronouncing any judgment, which may affect the rights of parties, extend their jurisdiction; (9.) to compel a discovery, or obtain evidence, which may assist the decision of other courts; and (10.) to preserve testimony, when in danger of being lost, before the matter, to which it relates, can be made the subject of judicial investigation."³

§ 33. Perhaps the most general, if not the most precise, description of a court of equity, in the English and American sense,

¹ 1 Black. Comm. 92.

² Mitford, Pl. Eq. by Jeremy, p. 111, 112.

³ Dr. Dana, in his *Abridgment and Digest*, ch. 1, art. 7, § 33 to 51 (1 Dana, *Abrid.* 101 to 197), has given a summary of the differences between equity jurisdiction and legal jurisdiction, in regard to contracts which may be read with utility. See also Mitford, *Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 4, 5.

is, that it has jurisdiction in cases of rights, recognized and protected by the municipal jurisprudence, where a plain, adequate, and complete remedy cannot be had in the courts of common law.¹ The remedy must be plain; for, if it be doubtful and obscure at law, equity will assert a jurisdiction.² It must be adequate; for, if at law it falls short of what the party is entitled to, that founds a jurisdiction in equity. And it must be complete; that is, it must attain the full end and justice of the case. It must reach the whole mischief, and secure the whole right of the party in a perfect manner, at the present time, and in future; otherwise, equity will interfere and give such relief and aid as the exigency of the particular case may require.³ The jurisdiction of a court of equity is, therefore, sometimes concurrent with the jurisdiction of a court of law; it is sometimes exclusive of it; and it is sometimes auxiliary to it.⁴

¹ Cooper, Eq. Pl. 128, 129; Mitford, Pl. Eq. by Jeremy, 112, 123; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 214, 215.

² Rathbone v. Warren, 10 Johns. 587; King v. Baldwin, 17 Johns. 384.

³ See Dr. Lieber's Ency. Americana, art. *Equity*; Mitford, Eq. Plead. by Jeremy, 111, 112, 117, 123; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 214, 215; Hinde's Pract. 153; Cooper, Eq. Pl. Sir James Mackintosh, in his life of Sir Thomas More, says: "Equity, in the acceptation in which the word is used in English Jurisprudence, is no longer to be confounded with that moral equity, which generally corrects the unjust operation of law, and with which it seems to have been synonymous in the days of Selden and Bacon. It is a part of laws formed from usages and determinations, which sometimes differ from what is called common law in its subjects; but chiefly varies from it in its modes of proof, of trial, and of relief. It is a jurisdiction so irregularly formed, and often so little dependent upon general principles, that it can hardly be defined or made intelligible, otherwise than by a minute enumeration of the matters cognizable by it." There is much of general truth in this statement; but it is, perhaps, a little too broad and undistinguishing for an accurate equity lawyer. Equity, as a science, and part of jurisprudence, built upon precedents, as well as upon principles, must occasionally fail in the mere theoretical and philosophical accuracy and completeness of all its rules and governing principles. But it is quite as regular, and exact in its principles and rules, as the common law; and, probably, as any other system of jurisprudence, established, generally, by positive enactments, or usages, or practical expositions, in any country, ancient or modern. There must be many principles and exceptions in every system, in a theoretical sense, arbitrary, if not irrational; but which are yet sustained by the accidental institutions, or modifications of society, in the particular country where they exist. There are wide differences between the philosophy of law, as actually administered in any country, and that abstract doctrine, which may in matters of government, constitute in many minds the law of philosophy.

⁴ Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (f.)

§ 34. Many persons, and especially foreigners, have often expressed surprise, that distinct courts should, in England and America, be established for the administration of equity, instead of the whole administration of municipal justice being confided to one and the same class of courts, without any discrimination between law and equity.¹ But this surprise is founded almost wholly upon an erroneous view of the nature of equity jurisprudence. It arises from confounding the general sense of equity, which is equivalent to universal or natural justice, *ex æquo et bono*, with its technical sense, which is descriptive of the exercise of jurisdiction over peculiar rights and remedies. Such persons seem to labor under the false notion, that courts of law can never administer justice with reference to principles of universal or natural justice, but are confined to rigid, severe, and uncompromising rules, which admit of no equitable considerations. Now, such a notion is founded in the grossest mistake of our systems of jurisprudence. Courts of common law, in a great variety of cases, adopt the most enlarged and liberal principles of decision; and, indeed, often proceed, as far as the nature of the rights and remedies, which they are called to administer, will permit, upon the same doctrines as courts of equity. This is especially true, in regard to cases involving the application of the law of nations, and of commercial and maritime law and usages, and even of foreign municipal law. And Mr. Justice Blackstone has correctly said, that "where the subject-matter is such, as requires to be determined *secundum æquum et bonum*, as generally upon actions on the case, the judgments of the courts of law are guided by the most liberal equity."²

§ 35. Whether it would, or would not, be best to administer the whole of remedial justice in one court, or in one class of courts, without any separation or distinction of suits, or of the form or modes of proceeding and granting relief, is a matter, upon which different minds in the same country, and certainly in different countries, would probably arrive at opposite conclusions. And, whether, if distinctions in rights and remedies, and forms of proceeding are admitted in the municipal jurisprudence, it would be best to confide the whole jurisdiction to the same court or courts, is also a matter, upon which an equal diversity of judgment might

¹ 3 Black. Comm. 441, 442.

² 3 Black. Comm. 430. See Eunomus, Dial. 3, § 60.

be found to exist. Lord Bacon, upon more than one occasion, expressed his decided opinion, that a separation of the administration of equity from that of the common law was wise and convenient. "All nations" (says he) "have equity. But some have law and equity mixed in the same court, which is worse; and some have it distinguished in several courts, which is better."¹ And again, among his aphorisms, he says: "Apud nonnullos receptum est, ut jurisdictio, quæ decernit secundum æquum et bonum, atque illa altera, quæ procedit secundum jus strictum, iisdem curiis deputentur; apud alios autem et diversis. Omnino placet curiarum separatio. Neque enim servabitur distinctio casuum, si fiat commixtio jurisdictionum; sed arbitrium legem tandem trahet."² Lord Hardwicke held the same opinion;³ and it is certainly a common opinion in countries governed by the common law. In civil-law countries, the general, if not the universal, practice is the other way;⁴ whether more for the advancement of public justice is a matter of doubt with many learned minds.

§ 36. But, whether the one opinion, or the other, be most correct in theory, it is most probable, that the practical system, adopted by every nation, has been mainly influenced by the peculiarities of its own institutions, habits, and circumstances; and especially by the nature of its own jurisprudence, and the forms of its own remedial justice. The union of equity and law in the same court, which might be well adapted to one country, or even to one age, might be wholly unfit for another country, or for another age. The question, in all such cases, must be a mixed question of public policy and private convenience; and never can be susceptible of any universal solution, applicable to all times, and all nations, and all changes in jurisprudence.

§ 37. Accordingly we find, that in the nations of antiquity different systems existed. And in Rome, with whose juridical institutions we are best acquainted, not only were different jurisdictions intrusted to different magistrates, but the very distinction between law and equity was clearly recognized.⁵ Thus, civil jurisdiction

¹ Bac. Jurisd. of the Marches; 4 Bac. Works, 274.

² Bac. De Aug. Scient. Lib. 8, cap. 3, Aph. 45; 7 Bac. Works, 448.

³ Parkes, Hist. Chan. App. p. 504, 505.

⁴ 1 Kames on Eq., Introd. p. 27 to 30.

⁵ 3 Black. Comm. 50; Parkes, Hist. Chan. 28; Butler's Horæ Subsecivæ [48]; p. 66; 1 Collect. Jurid. 25; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 1, tit. 2, § 2 to 24; id. tit. 10, § 1, 2, 3; id. tit. 11, § 1 to 9; id. tit. 14, § 1, 2; Id. tit. 20.

and criminal jurisdiction were confided to different magistrates.¹ The Roman Prætors generally exercised the former only. In the exercise of this authority, a broad distinction was taken between actions at law and actions in equity, the former having the name of *Actiones Civiles* and the latter of *Actiones Prætoriae*. And, in the same way, a like distinction was taken between *Obligaciones Civiles* and *Obligaciones Prætoriae*, between *Actiones Directæ* and *Actiones Utiles*.² And, in modern nations, it is not uncommon for different portions of judicial jurisdiction to be vested in different magistrates or tribunals. Thus, questions of state or public law, such as prize causes, and causes touching sovereignty, are generally confided to special tribunals; and maritime and commercial questions often belong to courts of admiralty, or other courts constituted for commercial purposes. There is, then, nothing incongruous, much less absurd, in separating different portions of municipal jurisprudence from each other, in the administration of justice; or in denying to one court the power to dispose of all the merits of a cause, when its forms of proceeding are ill adapted to afford complete relief, and giving jurisdiction of the same cause to another court, better adapted to do entire justice by its larger and more expansive authority.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF EQUITY JURISPRUDENCE.

[* § 38-40. The origin of the court of chancery, so far as its equitable jurisdiction is concerned, is involved in great uncertainty. The *Aula Regis* originally combined both law and equity. In the partition of this entire jurisdiction, the court of chancery retained, as its portion, the present prerogative offices of the English chancellors, such as the care of infants, idiots, lunatics, &c.

§ 41-50. The present equitable jurisdiction of the courts of chancery seems to have grown up, like most of the other institutions of the English common law, from the ex-

¹ Taylor's Elem. Civ. Law, 211, 213, 215, 216; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 2, tit. 1, art. 2, § 5 to 8; id. § 10.

² Taylor's Elem. Civ. Law, 213, 214; id. 93, 94, 95; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 50, tit. 16; De Verb. Signif. Actio; Inst. Lib. 4, tit. 6, § 3, 8; Inst. Lib. 3, tit. 14, § 1; Heinecc. De Edict. Prætor. Lib. 1. cap. 6; 3 Black. Comm. 50; Parkes, Hist. Ch. 28. See 1 Collect. Jurid. 33; De Lolme on Eng. Const. B. 1, ch. 11.

igencies of the times and of judicial administration. 1. The petitions to the king in council. 2. The cases where the Register Brevium afforded no precedent of a remedy. 3. Relief from fraud, accident, mistake, and forfeitures. 4. Uses and trusts. Its date may reach back, dimly, into the earliest times, immediately succeeding the Norman conquest; but the well-defined development of the distinct exercise of equitable jurisdiction, for the most part, dates from the time of Edward I.; and its character is but crude and imperfect, until the time of Sir Thomas More, and Cardinal Wolsey, under Henry VIII.

§ 51-58. Lord Nottingham laid the foundation of modern equity jurisprudence, and Lord Hardwicke measurably matured its several departments. It must be regarded as originally the residuum of the jurisdiction of the *Aula Regis*, when it was subdivided into distinct tribunals; and it still maintains the character, which it originally claimed, of being the complement of legal jurisdiction, in that it afforded relief in all cases, where justice required some remedy, which, without the intervention of the court of chancery, must fail, either wholly, or in part.

§ 54-58. In America, equity jurisprudence has grown up chiefly since the formation of our National Government. Both in the National and State courts, it follows the model of the English court of chancery, except that in some of the States, and in the national tribunals, it is administered by the common-law courts. In some of the States the equity jurisdiction is very imperfect and in some is scarcely known.]

§ 38. HAVING thus ascertained, what is the true nature and character of Equity Jurisprudence, as it is administered in countries, governed by the common law, it seemed proper, before proceeding to the consideration of the particulars of that jurisdiction, to take a brief review of its origin and progress in England, from which country America has derived its own principles and practice on the same subject. It is not intended here to speak of the common-law jurisdiction of the court of chancery, or of any of its specially delegated jurisdiction in exercising the prerogatives of the crown, as in cases of infancy and lunacy; or of its statutable jurisdiction in cases of bankruptcy.¹ The inquiry will mainly relate to its equitable, or, as it is sometimes called its extraordinary, jurisdiction.²

§ 39. The origin of the court of chancery is involved in the same obscurity, which attends the investigation of many other questions, of high antiquity, relative to the common law.³ The administration of justice in England was originally confided to the *Aula Regis*, or great Court or Council of the King, as the Supreme Court of Judicature, which, in those early times, undoubt-

¹ See Com. Dig. Chancery, C. 1; 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 262; 2 Mad. Ch. Pr. 447; id. 565; 3 Black. Comm. 426, 427, 428.

² 3 Black. Comm. 50; Com. Dig. Chancery, C. 2; 4 Inst. 79; 2 Inst. 552.

³ 3 Mitford, Pl. Equity, 1; Com. Dig. Chancery, A. 1; 4 Inst. 79; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vi.

edly administered equal justice, according to the rules of both law and equity, or of either, as the case might chance to require.¹ When that court was broken into pieces, and its principal jurisdiction distributed among various courts, the Common Pleas, the King's Bench, and the Exchequer, each received a certain portion, and the Court of Chancery also obtained a portion.² But, at that period, the idea of a court of equity, as contradistinguished from a court of law, does not seem to have subsisted in the original plan of partition, or to have been in the contemplation of the sages of the day.³ Certain it is, that among the earliest writers of the common law, such as Bracton, Glanville, Britton, and Fleta, there is not a syllable to be found relating to the equitable jurisdiction of the court of chancery.⁴ Fleta, indeed, mentions the existence of a certain office, called the chancery, and that to the office "it belongs, to hear and examine the petitions and complaints of plaintiffs, and to give them, according to the nature of the injuries shown by them, due remedy by the *writs of the King*."⁵

§ 40. That the court of chancery, in the exercise of its ordinary jurisdiction, is a court of very high antiquity, cannot be doubted. It was said by Lord Hobart, that it is an original and fundamental court, as ancient as the kingdom itself.⁶ The name of the court, Chancery (*Cancellaria*), is derived from that of the presiding officer, Chancellor (*Cancellarius*), an officer of great distinction, whose office may be clearly traced back, before the Conquest, to the times of the Saxon kings, many of whom had their chancellors.⁷ Lord Coke supposes that the title *Cancellarius* arose from his cancelling (*a cancellando*) the king's letters-patent, when granted contrary to law, which is the highest point of juris-

¹ 3 Black. Comm. 50; 1 Reeves, Hist. 62, 63.

² 3 Black. Comm. 50; Com. Dig. Chancery, A. 1, 2, 3; 1 Collect. Jurid. 27 to 30; Parkes, Hist. Chan. 16, 17, 28, 56; 1 Eq. Abridg. 129; Courts, B. note (a); 1 Wooddes. Lect. vi. p. 174, 175; Gilb. For. Roman, 14; 1 Reeves, Hist. 59, 60, 63; Bac. Abridg. Court of Chancery, C.

³ 3 Black. Comm. 50. The Legal Judic. in Chanc. stated (1727) ch. 2, p. 24.

⁴ Id. 50; Parkes, Hist. Chan. 25; 4 Inst. 82; 1 Reeves, Hist. 61; 2 Reeves, Hist. 250, 251.

⁵ Parkes, Hist. Chan. 25; Fleta, Lib. 2, cap. 13; 4 Inst. 78.

⁶ Hobart, 63; Com. Dig. Chancery, A. 1, 2; 2 Inst. 551, 552; 4 Inst. 78, 79.

⁷ Com. Dig. Chancery, A. 1; 4 Inst. 78; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vi. p. 161 to 165; Fryne's Animadv. 48; 1 Coll. Jurid. 26; 1 Rep. in Chan. App. 5, 7.

diction.¹ But the office and name of chancellor (Mr. Justice Blackstone has observed) was certainly known to the courts of the Roman emperors; where it originally seems to have signified a chief scribe, or secretary, who was afterwards invested with several judicial powers, and a general superintendency over the rest of the officers of the prince.² From the Roman emperors it passed to the Roman Church, ever emulous of imperial state; and hence every bishop has to this day his chancellor, the principal judge of his consistory. And when the modern kingdoms of Europe were established upon the ruins of the empire, almost every state preserved its chancellor, with different jurisdictions and dignities, according to their different constitutions. But in all of them, he seems to have had the supervision of all charters, letters, and such other public instruments of the crown, as were authenticated in the most solemn manner; and, therefore, when seals came in use, he always had the custody of the king's great seal.³

¹ 4 Inst. 88; Eunomus, Dial. 3, § 60.

² See Parkes, Hist. Chan. 14; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vi. p. 160; History of Chancery (1726), 3, 4.

³ 3 Black. Comm. 46, 47; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vi. p. 159, 160; 1 Coll. Jurid. 25; Parkes, Hist. Chan. 14; 1 Reeves, Hist. 61; 2 Reeves, Hist. 250, 251. Camden, in his Britannia, p. 180, states the matter in this manner: "The chancery drew that name from a chancellor, which name, under the ancient Roman emperors, was not of so great esteem and dignity, as we learn out of Vopiscus. But nowadays a name it is of the highest honor, and chancellors are advanced to the highest pitch of civil dignity; whose name Cassiodorus fetcheth from cross grates, or lattices, because they examined matters within places (*secretum*) severed apart, enclosed with partitions of such cross-bars, which the Latins called *Cancelli*. Regard (saith he to a chancellor) what name you bear. It cannot be hidden, which you do within lattices. For you keep your gates lightsome, your bars open, and your doors transparent as windows. Whereby it is very evident that he sat within grates, where he was to be seen on every side; and thereof it may be thought he took his name. But minding it was his part, being, as it were, the Prince's mouth, eye, and ear to strike and slash out with cross lines, lattice-like, those letters, commissions, warrants, and decrees, passed against law and right, or prejudicial to the Commonwealth, which, not improperly, they called to cancel, some think the name of chancellor came from this cancelling. And in a glossary of a later time this we read. A chancellor is he, whose office it is to look into and peruse the writings of the emperor; to cancel what is written amiss, and to sign that which is well." However, antiquaries differ much upon the origin of the word chancellor. Some derive it a *cancellis*, or latticed doors, and hold, that it was a denomination of those ushers, who had the care of the *cancelli*, or latticed doors, leading to the presence chamber of the emperors and other great men. See 1 Wooddes. Lect.

§ 41. It is not so easy to ascertain the origin of the equitable or extraordinary jurisdiction of the court of chancery. By some persons it has been held to be as ancient as the kingdom itself.¹ Others are of a different opinion. Lambard, who (according to Lord Coke) was a keeper of the records of the Tower, and a master in chancery, says, that he could not find that the chancellor held any court of equity, nor that any causes were drawn before the chancellor for help in equity, before the time of Henry IV. ; in whose days, by reason of intestine troubles, feoffments to uses did first begin, as some think.² Lord Coke says, it has been thought that this court of equity began in the reign of Henry V., and increased in the reign of Henry VI. ; but that its principal growth was during the chancellorship of Cardinal Wolsey, in the reign of Henry VIII.³ And he adds, in another place, that we find no cases in our books, reported before the reign of Henry VI.⁴ Lord Coke's known hostility to the jurisdiction of the court of chancery would very much abate our confidence in his researches, if they were not opposed by other pressing authorities.⁵

vi. p. 159, 160 ; Bythewood's *Eunomus*, Dial. 3, § 60, note (a), p. 564 ; Brissonius, *Voce*, *Cancellarius* ; *Vicat*, *Vocab. Voce*, *Cancellarius* ; 1 Savigny's *Hist. of Roman Law*, translated by Cathcart, p. 51 to 83.

¹ *Com. Dig. Chancery*, A. 2 ; *Jurisd. of Chancery Vind.* 1 Rep. in Chan. App. 9, 10 ; 1 *Collect. Jurid.* 23, 29, 30, 62 ; *Discourses on Judicial Authority of the Master of Rolls*, 2 ; *id. edit. of 1728*, Preface, cxi. to cxix. (ascribed to Lord Hardwicke) ; Barton, *Eq. Introd.* 2 to 13. This was Lord Hobart's opinion (as we have seen), who added : "That part of equity being opposite to regular law, and, in a manner, an arbitrary discretion, is still administered by the king himself, and his chancellor, in his name, *ab initio*, as a special trust, committed to the king, and not by him to be committed to another." *Hob. Rep.* 63. Camden (*Britannia*, p. 181) says : "It is plain and manifest that chancellors were in England before the Norman's Conquest." In the *Vindication of the Judgment*, given by King James, in the case of the court of chancery (1 *Collectanea Juridica*, p. 23, 61, 62), it is said : "It cannot be denied, but that the chancery, as it judgeth in equity, is a part of the law of the land, and of the ancient common law ;" "for equity is, and always hath been, a part of the law of the land."

² 2 *Inst.* 552. But see 1 Wooddes. *Lect. vi.* p. 176, note (b) ; Parkes, *Hist. Chan.* 27 ; *id.* 34 ; *Jurisdiction of Chan. Vind.* 1 Rep. in Chan. App. 7, 8 ; 1 *Coll. Jurid.* 27 ; *Legal Judic. in Chan.* stated (1727) p. 28, 29.

³ 2 *Inst.* 553.

⁴ 4 *Inst.* 82.

⁵ 3 *Black. Comm.* 54 ; 1 *Collect. Jurid.* 23, &c. ; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, A. 2 ; 1 Wooddes. *Lect. vi.* p. 176, 177. Camden (*Britannia*, p. 181) says : "To this chancellor's office, in process of time, much authority and dignity hath been

§ 42. Lord Hale's account of the matter is as follows: "There were many petitions referred to the Council (meaning either the *Privatum Concilium* or *Legale Concilium Regis*), from the parliament, sometimes the answers to particular petitions, and sometimes whole bundles of petitions in parliament, which by reason of a dissolution, could not be there determined, were referred, in the close of the parliament, sometimes to the council in general, and sometimes to the chancellor. And this I take to be the true original of the chancery jurisdiction in matters of equity, and gave rise to the multitude of equitable causes, to be there arbitrarily determined." And he afterwards adds: "Touching the equitable jurisdiction (in chancery), though in ancient time no such thing was known; yet it hath now so long obtained, and is so fitted to the disposal of lands and goods, that it must not be shaken, though, in many things, fit to be bounded or reformed. Two things might possibly give original [jurisdiction], or at least much contribute to its enlargement. (1.) The usual committing of particular petitions in parliament, not there determined, unto the determination of the chancellor, which was as frequent as to the council; and such a foundation being laid for a jurisdiction, it was not difficult for it to acquire more. (2.) By the invention of *uses* (that is, *trusts*), which were frequent and necessary, especially in the times of dissension touching the crown. In these proceedings the chancellor took himself to be the only dispenser of the king's conscience; and possibly the council was not called,

adjoined by authority of parliament; especially, ever since that lawyers stood so precisely upon the strict points of law, and caught men with the traps and snares of their law terms; that of necessity there was a court of equity to be erected, and the same committed to the chancellor, who might give judgment according to equity and reason, and moderate the extremity of law, which was wont to be thought extreme wrong."

Mr. Cooper, in his *Lettres de la Cour de la Chancellerie* (Lett. 25, p. 182), says, that there is not a doubt that the jurisdiction now exercised by the chancellor, to mitigate the severity of the common law, has always been a part of the law of England. And he cites, in proof of it, the remark stated in Burnet's *Life of Lord Hale*, p. 106, that he (Lord Hale) did look upon equity as a part of the common law, and one of the grounds of it. There is no doubt that this remark is well founded; but it may well be doubted whether Lord Hale meant any thing more than a general assertion, that in the administration of the common law there often mingled equitable considerations and constructions, and not merely a strict and rigid *summum jus*.

either as assistants or co-judges.”¹ We shall presently see how far these suggestions have been established.

§ 43. Lord Hardwicke seems to have accounted for the jurisdiction in another manner. The chancery is the grand *officina justitiæ*, out of which all original writs issue under the great seal, returnable into the courts of common law, to found proceedings in actions, competent to the common-law jurisdiction. The chancellor, therefore (according to Lord Hardwicke), was the most proper judge, whether, upon any petition so referred, such a writ could not be framed and issued by him as might furnish an adequate relief to the party; and if he found the common-law remedies deficient, he might proceed according to the extraordinary power committed to him by the reference; *ne curia regis deficeret in justitiâ exercendâ*.² Thus the exercise of the equitable jurisdiction took its rise from his being the proper officer to whom all applications were made for writs, to ground actions at the common law; and from many cases being brought before him, in which that law would not afford a remedy, and thereby being induced, through necessity or compassion, to extend a discretionary remedy.³ If (Lord Hardwicke added) this account of the original of the jurisdiction in equity in England be historically true, it will at least hint one answer to the question how the forum of common law and the forum of equity came to be separated with us. It was stopped at its source, and in the first instance; for if the case appeared to the chancellor to be merely of equity, he issued no original writ, without which the court of common law could not proceed in the cause, but he retained the cognizance to himself.⁴ The jurisdiction, then, may be deemed in some sort a resulting jurisdiction in cases not submitted to the decision of other courts by the crown or parliament, as the great fountain of justice.⁵

¹ Parkes, Hist. Chan. App. p. 502, 503. See also Hist. Chan. (1726) 11, 12, 13, 14; Parkes, Hist. Chan. 56.

² An account, nearly similar, of the court of chancery, is given in Bacon's Abridg. Court of Chancery, A. C.

³ Parkes, Hist. Chan. App. p. 503, 504.

⁴ Id. Rex v. Hare, 1 Str. Rep. 151, 160. Per *Yorke*, arguendo.

⁵ Id. 502; Hist of Chan. (1726) p. 9, 10, 12, 13; Parkes, Hist. of Chan. 56. Sir James Mackintosh, in his elegant Life of Sir Thomas More, has sketched out a history of chancery jurisdiction, not materially different from that given by Lord Hardwicke, aided as he was by the later discoveries of the commissioners

§ 44. Lord King (or whoever else was the author of the treatise entitled *The Legal Judicature in Chancery* stated),¹ deduced the jurisdiction of the court of chancery from the prerogative of the king to administer justice in his realm, being sworn by his coronation oath to deliver his subjects, *œquam et rectam justitiam*. This it was impossible for him to do in person; and, therefore, of necessity, he delegated it, by several portions, to ministers and officers deputed under him. But inasmuch as positive laws must, in their nature, consist of general institutions, there were, of necessity, a variety of particular cases still happening, where no proper or adequate remedy could be given by the ordinary courts of justice. Therefore, to supply this want, and correct the rigor of the positive law, recourse was had to the king, as the fountain of justice, to obtain relief in such cases. The method of application was by bills or petitions to the king, sometimes in parliament, and sometimes out of parliament, commonly directed to him and his council; and the granting of them was esteemed, not a matter of right, but of grace and favor. When parliament met, there were usually petitions of all sorts, preferred to the king; and the distinguishing of these petitions, and giving proper answers to them, occasioned a weight and load of business, especially when parliament sat but a few days.² Accordingly, in the eighth of the reign of Edward I. an ordinance passed, by which petitions of this sort were to be referred, according to their nature, to the chancellor, and the justices; and, in matters of grace, to the chancellor. And if the chancellor and others could not do without the king, then they were to bring the matter, with their own hands, before the king, to know his pleasure. So that no petitions should come

of the public records, as stated in their printed reports. I would gladly transcribe the whole passage, if it might not be thought to occupy too large a space for a work like the present.

¹ Mr. Cooper, in his *Lettres sur la Cour de la Chancellerie*, 85, note (1), expresses a doubt, whether Lord King was the author of this pamphlet, stating, that it was written by the same person who wrote the *History of the Chancery*, relating to the judicial power of that court, and the rights of the Masters (1726). Bishop Hurd, in his *Life of Warburton*, says, that they were both written by Mr. Burrough, with the aid of Bishop Warburton. The discourse of the Judicial Authority of the Master of the Rolls is said to have been written by Lord Hardwicke alone, or in conjunction with Sir Joseph Jekyll. Cooper, *Lettres*, &c. p. 334, App. C.; id. p. 85, note.

² Parkes, *Hist. Chan.* 66.

before the king and his council, but by the hands of the chancellor and other chief ministers.¹ And hence the writer deduces the conclusion, that, at this time, all matters of grace were determinable only by the king. And he added that he did not find any traces of a court of equity and chancery, in the time of Edward II.; and that it seemed to him that the equity side of the court began in the reign of Edward III.;² when by proclamation, he referred matters of grace to the cognizance of the chancellor.³

¹ Legal Judic. in Chan. (1727) p. 27, 28, 29. The Ordinance (8 Edw. I.) is cited at large in the work, *The Legal Judicature, &c.* p. 27, and is as follows: It recites, that the people who came to parliament, were often "delayed and disturbed, to the great grievance of them, and of the court, by the multitude of petitions laid before the king, the greatest part whereof might be despatched by the chancellor, and by the justices; therefore, it is provided, that all the petitions, which concern the seal, shall come first to the chancellor; and those which touch the exchequer, to the exchequer; and those which concern the justices, and the law of the land to the justices; and those which concern the Jews, to the justices of the Jews; and if the affairs are so great, or if they are of grace, that the chancellor and others cannot do it without the king, then they shall bring them with their own hands before the king, to know his pleasure; so that no petitions shall come before the king and his council, but by the hands of his said chancellor, and other chief ministers; so that the king and his council may, without the load of other business, attend to the great business of his realm, and of other foreign countries." The same ordinance will be found in Ryley, *Placit. Parliam.* p. 442, and Parkes, *Hist. Chan.* 29, 30.

² Legal Judic. in Chan. (1727) p. 28.

³ *Id.* 30, 31 (22 Edw. III.). See Parkes, *Hist. Chan.* 35; 1 *Equity Abr. Courts*, B. note (a). The proclamation is given in the *Legal Judicature, &c.* p. 30, 31, and in Parkes, *History of Chancery*, p. 35. It is as follows: "The king to the sheriffs of London greeting—Forasmuch as we are greatly and daily busied in various affairs, concerning us and the state of our realm of England: We will, that whatsoever business, relating as well to the common law of our kingdom, as our special grace, cognizable before us, from henceforth to be prosecuted as followeth, viz.: The common-law business, before the Archbishop of Canterbury elect, our chancellor, by him to be despatched; and the other matters, grantable by our special grace, be prosecuted before our said chancellor, or our well-beloved clerk, the keeper of the privy seal, so that they, or one of them, transmit to us such petitions of business, which, without consulting us, they cannot determine, together with their advice thereupon, without any further prosecution to be had before us for the same; that upon inspection thereof, we may further signify to the aforesaid chancellor or keeper, our will and pleasure therein; and that none other do for the future pursue such kind of business before us, we command you immediately, upon sight hereof, to make proclamation of the premises," &c. Mr. Lambard, in his work on the jurisdiction of courts, says of the court of chancery, that "the king did at first determine causes

And the jurisdiction was clearly established and acted on in the reign of Richard II.¹

in equity in person, and about the 20th of Edward III., the king going beyond sea, delegated this power to the chancellor ;” and then, he says, “Several statutes were made to enlarge the jurisdiction of this court ; 17 Rich. II. ch. 6,” &c. Bigland, arguendo, in *Rex v. Standish* (1 Mod. 59). And Bigland then adds, “But the chancellor took not upon him, *ex officio*, to determine matters in equity, till Edward the Fourth's time ; for, till then, it was done by the king in person, who delegated to whom he pleased.” This last remark seems, from the recent publication of the Record Commissioners, to be founded in error. 1 Cooper, Public Rec. p. 354, ch. 18.

¹ Id. 29, 32, 33 ; Parke, Hist. Chan. 39 to 44, 54 ; *Rex v. Standish*, 1 Mod. 59 ; Bigland's Argument. [* The developments made by the Record Commissioners, in the publication of the index to the records of the English chancery, in 1827, 1830, and 1832, beginning as early as the reign of Richard II. and ending with that of Elizabeth, show that, for a long period, after the jurisdiction of the court of chancery was fully established, it was chiefly occupied in affording relief against the tyranny and injustice of particular officers of position and power, or else against private persons of wealth or influence, sufficient to defy the ordinary courts of justice, and their ministers. This state of affairs seems to have been the origin of the offence of maintenance (which has now become practically obsolete), when an influential party, by espousing one side of a cause, rendered it impossible for the other side to obtain justice except by appeal to the king, who referred the cause to his chancellor, where such relief was afforded as the exigencies of the case required. This it was, no doubt, which gave rise to the opinion long entertained, and not yet fully abandoned, in the unprofessional mind, that the remedy, afforded in courts of equity, is measured more by the individual conscience of the chancellor, than by settled and well recognized principles of law.

These chancery calendars, published by the Record Commissioners, now succeeded by a distinct government department, under the title of The Public Record Office, have afforded great aid in illustrating the origin of English equity jurisprudence. They show that it was at first chiefly confined to particular cases of defect of legal administration, embracing :

1. The want of an appropriate writ.
2. Praying for a writ of habeas corpus to have the complainant released from an illegal imprisonment.
3. Some special ground of equitable interference, depending not upon any peculiarity of the case, in principle, but upon some obstruction to the ordinary judicial administration, which required the interference of the chancellor, as representative of the sovereign. For instance, the difficulty of obtaining justice, “by reason of the wealth or power of the wrong-doer.” It is alleged in one case that the defendant is “surrounded by many men of his maintenance ;” in another, “that the defendant is strong and abounding in riches and a great maintainer of quarrels, and the complainant is poor and hath not the means to sue for remedy at common law.” In still another, remedy is sought on the

§ 45. Mr. Justice Blackstone seems to rely on the same general origin of the jurisdiction of chancery, as arising from the reference of petitions from the privy council to the chancellor; and also from the introduction of uses of land, about the end of the reign of Edward III.¹ Mr. Wooddesson deduces the jurisdiction from the same source, and lays great stress on the proclamation of 22 Edw. III.; and also on the statute of 36 Edw. III. (stat. 1, ch. 9), which he, as well as Spelman, considers as referring many things to the sole and exclusive cognizance of the chancellor.² And he adds, that it seems incontrovertible, that the chancery exercised an equitable jurisdiction, though its practice, perhaps, was not very flourishing or frequent through the reign of Edward III.³

ground that the party is "so poor, and so ill, that he cannot pursue the common law." And in one case the defendant, who was enjoined from proceeding at law, petitioned to be relieved from the injunction, "because he is a poor man, and unable to sue in the King's Court of Chancery." *Goddard v. Ingepenne*, 1 Ch. Cal. viii.; *Thomas v. Wyse*, id. xiv.; *Bell v. Savage*, id. xiv.; *Royal v. Garter*, id. cxxx.

In some of the cases found in the three volumes of Chancery Calendars, published by the commissioners, we find the germ of the present equity jurisdiction; such as bills to set aside a conveyance obtained by intoxicating the plaintiff. *Stonehouse v. Stanshaw*, 1 Ch. Cal. xxix.; a bill by a tithe-owner, to obtain payment of his tithes, *Arkenden v. Starkey*, id. xxxv.; a bill to be quiet from the vexatious intermeddling of defendant, in regard to the possession of land already recovered at law, *Freeman v. Pontrell*, id. xlii.; a bill by an executor, to restrain the debtor of the estate from setting up a general release against such debt, which it was not intended to discharge, *Cobethorn v. Williams*, id. li.; a bill against an executor for the payment of the testator's debt, *Vavasour v. Chadwick*, id. xciii.; a bill to perpetuate testimony, *Earl of Oxford v. Tyrrell*, id. cx.; a bill for discovery of title-deeds, *Baker v. Parson*, 2 Ch. Cal. I.; a bill for specific performance of a contract, *Tyngelden v. Warham*, id. liv. For the character of these volumes, and their importance in disclosing the foundations of equity jurisdiction at a date far prior to that ordinarily ascribed to it, see *Wallace's Reporters*, 280-285; *Queen v. Millis*, 10 Clark & Finnelly, 659; *Vidal v. The City of Philadelphia*, 2 How. U. S. 127, 196; *Adams's Equity*, 51-56].

¹ 3 Black. Comm. 50 to 52; *Parkes*, Hist. Chan. 56.

² 1 Wooddes. Lect. vi. p. 176, and note (*f*); 2 Inst. 553; *Parkes*, Hist. Chan. 35; 1 Eq. Abr. Courts, B. note (*a*).

³ 1 Wooddes. Lect. vi. p. 178, 179 to 183; see also 7 Dane's Abridg. ch. 225, art. 4, § 1. Mr. Reeves, in his *History of the English Law*, traces the origin of the court of chancery to the reign of Richard II.; and refers the probable origin of its jurisdiction to the reference of petitions to the chancellor by parliament,

§ 46. But all our juridical antiquaries admit that the jurisdiction of chancery was established, and in full operation during the reign of Richard II. ; and their opinions are supported by the incontrovertible facts, contained in the remonstrances, and other acts of parliament. At this period the extensive use or abuse of the powers of chancery had become an object of jealousy with parliament; and various efforts were made to restrain and limit its authority. But the crown steadily supported it.¹ And the invention of the writ of *subpœna* by John Waltham, bishop of Salisbury, who was Keeper of the Rolls, about the 5th of Richard II., gave great efficiency, if not expansion, to the jurisdiction.² In the 13th of Richard II., the Commons prayed, that no party might be required to answer before the chancellor, or the council of the king, for any matter where a remedy is given by the common law, unless it be by writ of *scire facias* in the county where it is found, by the common law. To which the king answered, that he would preserve his royalty, as his progenitors had done before him.³ And the only redress granted was by stat. 17 Rich. II. ch. 6, by which it was enacted, that the chancellor should have power to award damages to the defendant, in case the suggestions of the bill were untrue, according to his discretion.⁴ The struggles upon this subject were maintained in the subsequent reigns of

or by the king's council; and conjectures, that he soon afterwards, as the king's adviser, began to grant redress, without any such reference, by the mere authority of the king. 3 Reeves, *Hist. of English Law*, p. 188 to 191. Mr. Jeremy, in the Introduction to his *Treatise on Equity Jurisdiction* (p. i. to xxi.), has given a sketch of the origin and progress of that jurisdiction in England. It is certainly a valuable, though concise, review of it. But it does not seem to contain any remarks, important to be taken notice of, beyond what are furnished by the other authors already cited. See also Barton on *Eq. Pract.*, *Introd.* p. 2 to 13.

¹ Parkes, *Hist. Chan.* 39 to 44.

² 3 Reeves, *Hist.* 192 to 194; *id.* 274, 379, 380, 381; 3 Black. *Comm.* 52; *Bac. Abr. Court of Chancery, C.* In the third year of the reign of Henry V., the commons, in a petition to the king, declared themselves aggrieved by writs of *subpœna*, sued out of chancery for matters determinable at the common law, "which were never granted, or used, before the time of the late king Richard, when John Waltham, heretofore bishop of Salisbury, of his craft, made, formed, and commenced such innovations." Parkes, *Hist. Chan.* 47, 48; 1 Wooddes. *Lect. vi.* p. 183, 184. See also Gilb. *Forum. Roman.* 17.

³ Parkes, *Hist. Chan.* 41; 4 *Inst.* 82.

⁴ Parkes, *Hist. Chan.* 41, 42; 3 Black. *Comm.* 52; 4 *Inst.* 82, 83; 1 Wooddes. *Lect. vi.* p. 183; 2 Reeves, *Hist.* 194.

Henry IV. and V. But the crown resolutely resisted all appeals against the jurisdiction; and finally, in the time of Edward IV., the process by bill and subpoena was become the daily practice of the court.¹

§ 47. Considerable new light has been thrown upon the subject of the origin and antiquity of the equitable jurisdiction of the court of chancery, by the recent publication of the labors of the Commissioners on the Public Records. Until that period, the notion was very common (which was promulgated by Lord Ellesmere) that there were no petitions of the chancery remaining in the office of record, before the 15th year of the reign of Henry VI. But it now appears, that many hundreds have been lately found among the records of the Tower for nearly fifty years antecedent to the period mentioned by Lord Ellesmere, and commencing about the time of the passage of the statute of 17 Rich. II. ch. 6.² But there is much reason to believe, that, upon suitable researches, many petitions or bills, addressed to the chancellor, will be found of a similar character during the reigns of Edward I., Edward II., and Edward III.³

¹ 3 Black. Comm. 53; Parkes, Hist. Chan. 45 to 57; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vi. p. 183 to 186; 3 Reeves, Hist. 193, 194, 274, 379, 380.

² 1 Cooper, Pub. Rec. 355. I extract this statement from the Preface to the Calendars of the Proceedings in Chancery, &c., published by the Record Commissioners in 1827, and now before me. That preface is signed by John Bayley, sub-commissioner. But it would seem, that it was in fact drawn up by Mr. Lysons, more than ten years before. Mr. Cooper, in his very valuable account of the Public Records, has published this preface verbatim; and has also extracted a letter of Mr. Lysons, written on the same subject in 1816. The preface and letter seem almost identical in language. 1 Cooper, Pub. Rec. ch. 18, p. 354; id. 394, note (b); id. 455 to 458. In the English Quarterly Jurist, for January, 1828, there will be found, in a review of these Calendars, a very succinct, but interesting account of the contents of the early Chancery Cases, printed by the Record Commissioners.

³ Mr. Cooper says, that he "has made some inquiries, which induce him to think that there still exist among the records at the Tower many petitions, or bills, addressed to the chancellor, during the reigns of Edw. I., Edw. II., and Edw. III., similar to those addressed to that judge during the reign of Richard II., selections from which have been printed. Upon a very slight research, several documents of this description are stated to have been discovered; but only one of them has been seen by the compiler. It is dated the 38th year of Edward III." 1 Cooper, Pub. Rec. Addenda, p. 454, 455. Mr. Barton says, that, so early as the reign of Edward I., the chancellor began to exercise an original and independent jurisdiction, as a court of equity, in contradistinction to a court of law. Barton on Eq. Pr. Introd. p. 7.

§ 48. From the proceedings, which have been published by the Record Commissioners, it appears, that the chief business of the court of chancery in those early times did not arise from the introduction of uses of land, according to the opinion of most writers on the subject. Very few instances of applications to the chancellor on such grounds occur among the proceedings of the chancery during the first four or five reigns after the equitable jurisdiction of the court seems to have been fully established. Most of these ancient petitions appear to have been presented in consequence of assaults, and trespasses, and a variety of outrages, which were cognizable at common law; but for which the party complaining was unable to obtain redress, in consequence of the maintenance and protection afforded to his adversary by some powerful baron, or by the sheriff, or by some officer of the county in which they occurred.¹

§ 49. If this be a true account of the earliest known exercises of equitable jurisdiction, it establishes the point that it was principally applied to remedy defects in the common-law proceedings; and, therefore, that equity jurisdiction was entertained upon the same ground which now constitutes the principal reason of its interference; namely, that a wrong is done, for which there is no plain, adequate, and complete remedy in the courts of common law.² And in this way great strength is added to the opinions of Lord Hale and Lord Hardwicke, that its jurisdiction is in reality the residuum of that of the *Commune Concilium* or *Aula Regis*, not conferred on other courts, and necessarily exercisable by the crown, as a part of its duty and prerogative to administer justice and equity.³ The introduction of Uses or Trusts at a later period, may have given new activity and extended operation to the juris-

¹ This passage is a literal transcript from the Preface to the Calendars in Chancery; and it is fully borne out by the examples of those bills and petitions, given at large in the same work. Mr. Cooper, in his own work on the Public Records, has given an abstract, or marginal note, of all the examples thus given, from the reign of Richard II., to the reign of Richard III., amounting in number to more than one hundred. 1 Cooper, Pub. Rec. 359, 373; id. 377 to 385. As we recede from the reign of Richard II. and advance to modern times, the cases become of a more mixed character, and approach to those now entertained in chancery.

² See Treatise on Subpœna, ch. 2; Harg. Law. Tracts, p. 333, 334.

³ See Eunomus, Dial. 3, § 60; 1 Eq. Abrid. Courts, B. (a); ante, § 42. See the British and Foreign Quarterly Review, No. 27, Dec. 1842, p. 167, 168, 172, 173.

diction of the court; but it did not find it. The redress given by the chancellor in such cases was merely a new application of the old principles of the court; since there was no remedy at law to enforce the observance of such uses or trusts.¹

§ 50. From this slight review of the origin and progress of equitable jurisdiction in England, it cannot escape observation how naturally it grew up, in the same manner, and under the same circumstances, as the equitable jurisdiction of the Prætor at Rome. Each of them arose from the necessity of the thing in the actual administration of justice, and from the deficiencies of the positive law (the *lex scripta*), or from the inadequacy of the remedies in

¹ See 3 Black. Comm. 52; 3 Reeves, Hist. 379, 381; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vi. p. 174, 176, 178, 182; Eunomus, Dial. 3, § 60; Parkes, Hist. Chan. 28 to 31. The view which is here taken of the subject is confirmed by the remarks of the commissioners, under the Chancery Commission, in the 50th George III., whose report was afterwards published by parliament in 1826. The passage to which allusion is made is as follows: "The proceedings in the courts of common law are simple, and generally founded on certain writs of great antiquity, conceived in prescribed forms. This adherence to prescribed forms has been considered as important to the due administration of justice in common cases. But, in progress of time, cases arose in which full justice could not be done in the courts of common law, according to the practice then prevailing. And, for the purpose of obtaining an adequate remedy, in such cases, resort was had to the extraordinary jurisdiction of the courts of equity, which alone had the power of examining the party on oath, and thereby acting through the medium of his conscience, and of procuring the evidence of persons not amenable to the jurisdiction of the courts of common law, and whose evidence therefore it was, in many cases, impossible to obtain without the assistance of a court of equity. The application to this extraordinary jurisdiction, instead of being in the form of a writ, prescribed by settled law, seems always to have been in the form of a petition of the party or parties aggrieved, stating the grievance, the defect of remedy by proceedings in the courts of common law, and the remedy, which, it was conceived, ought to be administered. This mode of proceeding unavoidably left every complaining party to state his case, according to the particular circumstances, always asserting that the party was without adequate remedy at the common law." The reviewer of the early proceedings in chancery, in the English Jurist, for January, 1828, concludes his observations in the following manner: "It is, we think, established to demonstration, that the general jurisdiction of the court was derived from that extensive judicial power, which, in early times, the king's ordinary council had exercised; but that it arose gradually and insensibly, as circumstances occurred, and occasions seemed to demand it; and that, having so arisen, it afterwards settled down by equally slow degrees, and in consequence of occasional resistance, excited to its encroaching and despotic spirit, appears to us to be equally as demonstrable." 1 English Quarterly Jurist, p. 350.

the prescribed forms to meet the full exigency of the particular case. It was not an usurpation for the purpose of acquiring and exercising power; but a beneficial interposition, to correct gross injustice, and to redress aggravated and intolerable grievances.¹

§ 51. But, be the origin of the equity jurisdiction of the court of chancery what it may, from the time of the reign of Henry VI., it constantly grew in importance;² and, in the reign of Henry VIII., it expanded into a broad and almost boundless jurisdiction under the fostering care and ambitious wisdom and love of power of Cardinal Wolsey.³ Yet (Mr. Reeves observes), after all, notwithstanding the complaints of the cardinal's administration of justice, he has the reputation of having acted with great ability in the office of chancellor, which lay heavier upon him than it had upon any of his predecessors, owing to the too great care with which he entertained suits, and the extraordinary influx of business, which might be attributed to other causes.⁴ Sir Thomas More, the successor to the cardinal, took a more sober and limited view of equity jurisprudence, and gave public favor as well as dignity to the decrees of the court. But still there were clamors from those who were hostile to equity during his time; and espe-

¹ 1 Kames on Equity, Introd. p. 19; Butler's *Horsæ Jurid.* § v. 3, p. 43 to 46; *id.* App. note, 3, p. 130. Those who have a curiosity to trace the origin and history of the Prætor's authority in Rome, and the gradual development, or assumption of jurisdiction by him, will find ample means for this purpose in Taylor's *Elements of the Civil Law*, p. 210 to 216, and in Heinæccius *De Edictis Prætorum*, Lib. 1, cap. 6, per tot. The same complaints were made at Rome as in England, of the excess and abuse of authority by the Prætors; and the complaints commonly ended in the same way. The jurisdiction was occasionally restricted; but it was generally confirmed. See Butler's *Horsæ Jurid.* § v. 3, p. 43 to 46.

² Parkes, *Hist. Chan.* 55, 56; 3 Reeves, *Hist.* 379 to 382.

³ 4 Reeves, *Hist.* 368, 369; Parkes, *Hist. Chan.* 61, 62; 4 *Inst.* 91, 92. It seems that the first delegation of the powers of the lord chancellor to commissioners was in the time of Cardinal Wolsey. It will be found in Rymer's *Fœdera*, tom. 14, p. 299; Parkes, *Hist. of Chan.* 60, 61. It was in the same reign that the master of the rolls (it is said), under a like appointment, first set apart and used to hear causes at the Rolls in the afternoon. The master, who thus first heard causes, was Cuthbert Tunstall. 4 Reeves, *Hist. of the Law*, 368, 369; 5 Reeves, *Hist.* 160. But see *Discourse on the Judicial Authority of the Master of the Rolls (1728)*, § 3, p. 83, &c.; *id.* § 4, p. 110, &c., ascribed to Sir Joseph Jekyll.

⁴ 4 Reeves, *Hist.* 370.

cially to the power of issuing injunctions to judgments and other proceedings in order to prevent irreparable injustice.¹ This controversy was renewed with much greater heat and violence in the reign of James I. upon the point, whether a court of equity could give relief for or against a judgment at common law; and it was mainly conducted by Lord Coke against, and by Lord Ellesmere in favor of the chancery jurisdiction. At last, the matter came directly before the king, and, upon the advice and opinion of very learned lawyers, to whom he referred it, his majesty gave judgment in favor of the equitable jurisdiction in such cases.² Lord Bacon succeeded Lord Ellesmere; but few of his decrees, which have reached us, are of any importance to posterity.³ But his celebrated ordinances for the regulation of chancery gave a systematical character to the business of the court; and some of the most important of them (especially as to bills of review) still constitute the fundamental principles of its present practice.⁴

§ 52. From this period, down to the time when Sir Heneage Finch (afterwards Earl of Nottingham) was elevated to the Bench (in 1673), little improvement was made, either in the principles

¹ Sir James Mackintosh's *Life of Sir Thomas More*; 4 Reeves, *Hist.* 370 to 376; Parkes, *Hist. Chan.* 63 to 65.

² 1 *Collect. Jurid.* 23, &c.; 1 Wooddes. *Lect.* vi. p. 186; 3 *Black. Comm.* 54; Parkes, *Hist. Chan.* 80. The controversy gave rise to many pamphlets, not only at the time, but in later periods. The learned reader, who is inclined to enter upon the discussion of these points, now of no importance, except as a part of the juridical history of England, may consult advantageously the following works: *Observations concerning the office of Lord Chancellor*, published in 1651, and ascribed (though it is said incorrectly) to Lord Ellesmere. (*Discourse concerning the Judicial Authority of the Master of Rolls*, 1728, p. 51.) *A Vindication of the Judgment of King James, &c.*, printed in an Appendix to the first volume of *Reports in Chancery*, and in 1 *Collect. Jurid.* 23, &c.; the several *Treatises on the Writ of Subpœna in Chancery*, and the *Abuses and Remedies in Chancery*, in *Hargrave's Law Tracts*, p. 321, 425; and 4 Reeves, *Hist. of the Law*, p. 370 to 377; 2 *Swanst.* 24, note. There is a curious anecdote related of Sir Thomas More, who invited the judges to dine with him, and, after dinner, showed them the number and nature of the causes in which he had granted injunctions to judgments of the court of common law; and the judges, upon full debate of the matters, confessed that they could have done no otherwise themselves. The anecdote is given at large in Mr. Cooper's *Lettres sur la Cour de la Chancellerie*, *Lett.* 25, p. 185, note 1, from Roper's *Life of Sir Thomas More*.

³ 3 *Black. Comm.* 55.

⁴ See *Bacon's Ord. in Chancery*, by Beams.

or in the practice of chancery;¹ and none of the persons who held the seals were distinguished for uncommon attainments or learning in their profession.² With Lord Nottingham a new era commenced. He was a person of eminent abilities, and the most incorruptible integrity. He possessed a fine genius, great liberality of views, and a thorough comprehension of the true principles of equity; so that he was enabled to disentangle the doctrines from any narrow and technical notions, and to expand the remedial justice of the court far beyond the aims of his predecessors. In the course of nine years, during which he presided in the court, he built up a system of jurisprudence and jurisdiction upon wide and rational foundations which served as a model for succeeding judges, and gave a new character to the court;³ and hence he has been emphatically called "the father of equity."⁴ His immediate successors availed themselves very greatly of his profound learning and judgment. But a successor was still wanted, who with equal genius, abilities, and liberality, should hold the seals for a period long enough to enable him to widen the foundation and complete the structure, begun and planned by that illustrious man. Such a successor at length appeared in the person of Lord Hardwicke. This great judge presided in the court of chancery during the period of twenty years; and his numerous decisions evince the most thorough learning, the most exquisite skill, and the most elegant juridical analysis. There reigns, throughout all of them, a spirit of conscientious and discriminating equity, a sound and enlightened judgment, as rare as it is persuasive, and a power of illustration from analogous topics of the law, as copious as it is exact and edifying. Few judges have left behind them a reputation more bright and enduring; few have had so favorable an opportunity of conferring lasting benefits upon the jurisprudence of their country; and still fewer have improved it by so large, so various, and so important contributions. Lord Hardwicke, like Lord Mansfield, combined with his

¹ 3 Black. Comm. 55.

² See Parkes, Hist. Chan. 92 to 210.

³ Mr. Justice Blackstone has pronounced a beautiful eulogy on him, in 3 Black. Comm. 56, from which the text is, with slight alterations, borrowed. See also 4 Black. Comm. 442.

⁴ 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. Preface, 13. See Parkes, Hist. Chan. 211, 212, 213, 214; 1 Kent, Comm. Lect. 21, p. 492 (2d edit.).

judicial character the still more embarrassing character of a statesman, and, in some sort, of a minister of state. Both of them of course, encountered great political opposition (whether rightly or wrongfully, it is beside the purpose of this work to inquire); and it is fortunate for them, that their judicial labors are embodied in solid volumes, so that, when the prejudices and the passions of the times are passed away, they may remain open to the severest scrutiny, and claim from posterity a just and unimpeachable award.¹

§ 53. This short and imperfect sketch of the origin and history of equity jurisdiction in England will be here concluded. It has not been inserted in this place from the mere desire to gratify those whose curiosity may lead them to indulge in antiquarian inquiries, laudable and interesting as it may be. But it seemed, if not indispensable, at least important, as an introduction to a more minute and exact survey of that jurisdiction, as administered in the present times. In the first place, without some knowledge of the origin and history of Equity Jurisdiction, it will be difficult to ascertain the exact nature and limits of that jurisdiction; and how it can, or ought to be, applied to new cases, as they arise. If it be a mere arbitrary, or usurped jurisdiction, standing upon authority and practice, it should be confined within the very limits of its present range; and the *terra incognita*, and the *terra prohibita*, ought to be the same, as to its boundaries. If, on the other hand, its jurisdiction be legitimate, and founded in the very nature of remedial justice, and in the delegation of authority in all cases, where a plain, adequate, and complete remedy does not exist in any other court, to protect acknowledged rights, and to prevent acknowledged wrongs (that is, acknowl-

¹ See 1 Kent, Comm. Lect. 21, p. 494 (2d edit.), and Lord Kenyon's opinion in *Goodtitle v. Otway*, 7 T. R. 411. Mr. Charles Butler, in his *Reminiscences*, has given a sketch of Lord Hardwicke and Lord Mansfield, which no lawyer can read without high gratification. Few men were better qualified to judge of their attainments. 1 Butler's *Reminis.* § 11, n. 1, 2, p. 104 to 116. Lord Eldon, in *Ex parte Greenway*, 6 Ves. 812, said: "He (Lord Hardwicke) was one of the greatest judges that ever sat in Westminster Hall." Those who wish to form just notions of the great chancellors of succeeding times, down to our own, may well consult the same interesting pages, in which Lord Camden, Lord Thurlow, Lord Roslyn, Sir William Grant, and, though last not least, the venerable Lord Eldon, are spoken of in terms of high, but discriminating, praise. See 4 Kent's *Comm. Lect.* 21, p. 494, 495 (2d edit.).

edged in the municipal jurisprudence), then it is obvious, that it has an expansive power, to meet new exigencies ; and the sole question, applicable to the point of jurisdiction, must from time to time be, whether such rights and wrongs do exist, and whether the remedies therefor in other courts, and especially in the courts of common law, are full, and adequate to redress. If the present examination (however imperfect) has tended to any result, it is to establish, that the latter is the true and constitutional predicament and character of the court of chancery.

§ 54. In the next place, a knowledge of the origin and history of equity jurisdiction will help us to understand, and in some measure, to explain, as well as to limit, the anomalies, which do confessedly exist in the system. We may trace them back to their sources, and ascertain how far they were the result of accidental, or political, or other circumstances ; of ignorance, or perversity, or mistake in the judges ; of imperfect development of principles ; of narrow views of public policy ; of the seductive influence of prerogative ; or, finally, of a spirit of accommodation to the institutions, habits, laws, or tenures of the age, which have long since been abolished, but have left the scattered fragments of their former existence behind them. We shall thus be enabled to see more clearly, how far the operation of these anomalies should be strengthened or widened ; when they may be safely disregarded, in their application, to new cases and new circumstances ; and when, through a deformity in the general system, they cannot be removed, without endangering the existence of other portions of the fabric, or interfering with the proportions of other principles, which have been moulded and adjusted with reference to them.

§ 55. In the next place, such a knowledge will enable us to prepare the way for the gradual improvement, as well of the science itself, as of the system of its operations. Changes in law, to be safe, must be slowly and cautiously introduced and thoroughly examined. He who is ill-read in the history of any law, must be ill-prepared to know its reasons as well as its effects. The causes or occasions of laws are sometimes as important to be traced out as their consequences. The new remedy to be applied may, otherwise, be as mischievous as the wrong to be redressed. History has been said to be philosophy teaching by examples ; and to no subject is this remark more applicable than to law, which is em-

phatically the science of human experience. A sketch, however general, of the origin and sources of any portion of jurisprudence, may at least serve the purpose of pointing out the paths to be explored; and, by guiding the inquirer to the very places he seeks, may save him from the labor of wandering in the devious tracts, and of bewildering himself in mazes of errors as fruitless as they may be intricate.

§ 56. In America, equity jurisprudence had its origin at a far later period than the jurisdiction properly appertaining to the courts of common law. In many of the colonies, during their connection with Great Britain, it had either no existence at all, or a very imperfect and irregular administration.¹ Even since the Revolution, which severed the ties which bound us to the parent country, it has been of slow growth and cultivation; and there are still some States in whose municipal jurisprudence it has no place at all, or no place as a separate and distinct science. Even in those States in which it has been cultivated with the most success, and for the greatest length of time, it can scarcely be said to have been generally studied or administered, as a system of enlightened and exact principles, until about the close of the eigh-

¹ Equity jurisprudence scarcely had an existence, in any large and appropriate sense of the term, in any part of New England, during its colonial state. (1 Dane, Abridg. ch. 1, art 7, § 51; 7 Dane, Abridg. ch. 225, art. 1, 2.) In Massachusetts and Rhode Island, it still has but a very limited extent. In Maine and New Hampshire, more general equity powers have been, within a few years, given to their highest courts of law. In Vermont and Connecticut, it had an earlier establishment; in the former State, since the Revolution; and in the latter, a short time before the Revolution. 2 Swift, Dig. p. 15, edit. 1823. In Virginia, there does not seem to have been any court, having chancery powers, earlier than the act of 1700, ch. 4 (3 Tucker's Black. App. 7). In New York, the first court of chancery was established in 1701; but it was so unpopular, from its powers being vested in the governor and council, that it had very little business until it was reorganized in 1778. (1 John. Ch. Rep. Preface; Campb. and Camb. American Chancery Digest, Preface, 6; Blake's Chan. Introd. viii.) In New Jersey, it was established in 1705 (1 Fonbl. Eq. by Laussat, edit. 1831, p. 14, note). Mr. Laussat in his Essay on Equity, in Pennsylvania (126), has given an account of its origin and progress and present state in that commonwealth (p. 16 to 31). From this account we learn that the permanent establishment of a court of equity was successfully resisted by the people during the whole of its colonial existence; and that the year 1790 is the true point at which we must fix the establishment of equity in the jurisprudence of Pennsylvania. It has since been greatly expanded by some legislative enactments. See also 7 Dane, Abridg. ch. 225, art. 1, 2.

teenth century.¹ Indeed, until a much later period, when reports were regularly published, it scarcely obtained the general regard of the profession beyond the purlieus of its immediate officers and ministers. Even in the State of New York, whose rank in jurisprudence has never been second to that of any State in the Union (if it has not been the first among its peers), equity was scarcely felt in the general administration of justice, until about the period of the Reports of Caines and of Johnson. And, perhaps, it is not too much to say, that it did not attain its full maturity and masculine vigor, until Mr. Chancellor Kent brought it to the fulness of his own extraordinary learning, unconquerable diligence, and brilliant talents. If this tardy progress has somewhat checked the study of the beautiful and varied principles of equity in America, it has on the other hand enabled us to escape from the embarrassing effect of decisions which might have been made at an earlier period, when the studies of the profession were far more limited, and the Benches of America were occasionally, like that of the English Chancery in former ages, occupied by men who, whatever might have been their general judgment or integrity, were inadequate to the duties of their stations, from their want of learning, or from their general pursuits. Indeed, there were often other circumstances which greatly restricted or impeded a proper choice; such as the want of the due enjoyment of executive or popular favor by men of the highest talents, or the discouragement of a narrow and incompetent salary.

§ 57. The equity jurisprudence, at present exercised in America, is founded upon, coextensive with, and, in most respects, conformable to, that of England. It approaches even nearer to the latter than the jurisdiction exercised by the courts of common law in America approaches to the common law as administered in England. The common law was not in many particulars applicable to the situation of our country when it was first introduced. Whereas, equity jurisprudence, in its main streams, flows from the same sources here that it does in England, and admits of an almost universal application in its principles. The Constitution of the United States has, in one clause, conferred on the national judiciary cognizance of cases in equity as well as in law; and the uniform interpretation of that clause has been, that, by cases in

¹ 1 Dane, Abridg. ch. 1, art. 7, § 51; 7 Dane, Abridg. ch. 225, art. 1, 2.

equity are meant cases, which, in the jurisprudence of England (the parent country), are so called, as contradistinguished from cases of the common law.¹ So that, in the courts of the United States, equity jurisprudence generally embraces the same matters of jurisdiction and modes of remedy as exist in England.²

§ 58. In nearly all the States in which equity jurisprudence is recognized, it is now administered in the modes, and according to the forms which appertain to it in England, that is, as a branch of jurisprudence, separate and distinct from the remedial justice of courts of common law.³ In Pennsylvania, it was formerly administered through the forms, remedies, and proceedings of the common law; and was thus mixed up with legal rights and titles in a manner not easily comprehensible elsewhere.⁴ This anomaly has been in a considerable degree removed by some recent legislative enactments. In some of the States in the Union distinct courts of equity are established; in others, the powers are exercised concurrently with the common-law jurisdiction. by the same tribunal, being at once a court of law and a court of equity, somewhat analogous to the case of the Court of Exchequer in England. In others, again, no general equity powers exist; but a few specified heads of equity jurisprudence are confided to the ordinary courts of law, and constitute a limited statutable jurisdiction.⁵

¹ *Robinson v. Campbell*, 3 Wheaton, 212, 221, 223; *Parsons v. Bedford*, 3 Peters, Sup. Ct. 433, 447; 3 Story, Comm. on Const. 506, 507; id. 644, 645; *U. S. v. Howland*, 4 Wheaton, 115; 7 Dane, Abridg. ch. 225, art. 1.

² See *Foster v. Swasey*, 2 Wood. & Min. 219.

³ *Fonbl. on Eq. by Laussat* (edit. 1831), p. 13 to 20; 7 Dane's Abridg. ch. 225, art. 1, 2.

⁴ *Id.* 18 to 20.

⁵ Mr. Chancellor Kent, in a note to his Commentaries, has given a brief statement of the actual organization of equity jurisdiction in all the States; to which I gladly refer the learned reader. 4 Kent, Comm. Lect. 58, p. 163, note (d). A fuller account may be found in the preface to Campbell and Cambreleng's *American Chancery Digest* (edit. 1828), in Mr. Laussat's edition of *Fonblanque on Equity*, vol. 1, p. 11 to 20 (edit. 1831); and in Mr. Laussat's *Essay on Equity in Pennsylvania*, App. (1826). As the systems of the different States are, in many cases, subject to legislative authority, which is frequently engaged in introducing modifications, a more minute detail would scarcely be of any permanent importance to the profession. The article on Chancery Jurisdiction, in the second volume of the *American Jurist*, p. 314, contains many very valuable suggestions on this subject; and exhibits in a striking manner the importance of equity jurisprudence. See also 7 Dane's Abridg. ch. 225, art. 1, 2.

CHAPTER III.

GENERAL VIEW OF EQUITY JURISDICTION.

[* § 59. Old definitions of equity jurisdiction, fraud, accident, and trust.

§ 60, 61. Defects of the definition, that the law extends to some such cases, and others not reached by equity.

§ 62. The true definition found only in a specific enumeration of the subjects.

§ 63-64 *g*. Maxims, in equity. Equity follows the law. Where there is equal equity the law prevails. The first in time, all other things being equal, is first in right, Who seeks equity must do equity. Equality is equity. Equity regards that as done often, which ought to be done.

§ 64 *h-64 k*. General rules affecting the jurisdiction of courts of equity. 1. If courts of equity once assume jurisdiction of a subject, they will not relinquish it, because courts of law subsequently entertain the same jurisdiction. 2. When courts of equity once acquire jurisdiction of a cause for any purpose, they will ordinarily proceed to a final determination of it.

§ 65. The cases not uniform as to this rule, so far as bills of discovery.

§ 66. Difficulty in fixing the exact rule as to discovery.

§ 67. If discovery sought in matters of account, equity will finish the case.

§ 68. So also in matters of fraud, accident, and mistake.

§ 69. Exceptions stated.

§ 70. Beyond these limits, it is difficult to fix any boundaries to equity jurisdiction, consequent upon discovery.

§ 71. Some American cases claim general equity jurisdiction upon the fact of discovery being obtained.

§ 72. Exceptions stated.

§ 73, 74. The rule does not extend beyond cases appropriate to equitable control, and then under restrictions.

§ 74 *a-74 e*. The English rule, upon this subject, explained and vindicated, and its just limits more specifically defined.]

§ 59. HAVING traced out the nature and history of Equity Jurisprudence, we are naturally led to the consideration of the various subjects, which it embraces, and the measure and extent of its jurisdiction. Courts of equity, in the exercise of their jurisdiction, may, in a general sense, be said to differ from common law, in the modes of trial, in the modes of proof, and in the modes of relief. One or more of these elements will be found essentially to enter, as an ingredient, into every subject over which they exert their authority. Lord Coke has, in his summary manner, stated, that three things are to be judged of in the court of conscience or equity: covin, accident, and breach of confidence;¹ or, as we

¹ 4 Inst. 84; Com. Dig. Chancery, Z.; 3 Black. Comm. 431; 1 Eq. Abr. Courts, B. § 4, p. 130; 1 Dane's Abridg. ch. 6, art. 1, § 3; Earl of Bath v.

should now say, matters of fraud, accident, and trust. Mr. Justice Blackstone has also said, that courts of equity are established "to detect latent frauds and concealments which the process of the courts of law is not adapted to reach; to enforce the execution of such matters of trust and confidence as are binding in conscience, though not cognizable in a court of law; to deliver from such dangers as are owing to misfortune, or oversight; and to give a more specific relief, and more adapted to the circumstances of the case, than can always be obtained by the generality of the rules of the positive or common law."¹

§ 60. These, as general descriptions, are well enough; but they are far too loose and inexact to subserve the purposes of those who seek an accurate knowledge of the actual, or supposed, boundaries of equity jurisdiction. Thus for example although fraud, accident, and trust are proper objects of courts of equity, it is by no means true, that they are exclusively cognizable therein. On the contrary, fraud is, in many cases, cognizable in a court of law. Thus for example reading a deed falsely to an illiterate person, whether it be so read by the grantee, or by a stranger, avoids it as to the other party, at law.² And, sometimes, fraud, such as fraud in obtaining a will, or devise of lands, is exclusively cognizable there.³ Many cases of accident are remediable at law, such as losses of deeds, mistakes in accounts and receipts, impossibilities in the strict performance of conditions, and other like cases. And even trusts, though in general of a peculiar and exclusive jurisdiction in equity, are sometimes cognizable at law; as, for instance, cases of bailments, and that larger class of cases, where the action for money had and received for another's use is maintained *ex æquo et bono*.⁴

§ 61. On the other hand, there are cases of fraud, of accident, and of trust, which neither courts of law, nor of equity, presume to relieve, or mitigate.⁵ Thus, a man may most unconscientiously wage his law in an action of debt; and yet, the aggrieved party

Sherwin, Prec. Ch. 261; s. c. 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. 266; Rex v. Hare & Mann, 1 Str. 149, 150, Yorke, *arguendo*; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 208, 209; Bac. Abridg. Court of Chancery, C.

¹ 1 Black. Comm. 92. And see 3 Black. Comm. 429 to 432.

² Thoroughgood's case, 2 Co. 9 a; Hobart, 296; id. 126, 330, 426; Shulter's case, 12 Co. 90; Jenkin's Cent. 166.

³ 1 Hovenden on Frauds, introd. p. 16; id. ch. 10, p. 252; 1 Dane, Abridg. ch. 9, art. 1, § 3; 3 Wooddes. Lect. lvi. p. 477.

⁴ 3 Black. Comm. 431, 432; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 208, 209.

⁵ 1 Foul. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 5, p. 16.

will not be relieved in any court of law or equity.¹ And, where the law has determined a matter, with all its circumstances, equity cannot (as we have seen) intermeddle against the positive rules of law.² And, therefore, equity will not interfere in such cases, notwithstanding accident, or unavoidable necessity.³ This was long ago remarked by Lord Talbot, who, after saying, "There are instances, indeed, in which a court of equity gives remedy, where the law gives none," added: "But where a particular remedy is given by law, and that remedy is bounded and circumscribed by particular rules, it would be very improper for this court to take it up, where the law leaves it, and extend it further than the law allows."⁴ And upon this ground, relief was refused to a creditor of the wife against her husband, after her death, though he had received a large fortune with her on his marriage.⁵ So, a man may by accident omit to make a will, appointment, or gift, in favor of some friend or relative; or he may leave his will unfinished; and yet there can be no relief.⁶ And many cases of the non-performance of conditions precedent are equally without redress.⁷ So, cases of trust may exist, in which the parties must abide by their own false confidence in others, without any aid from courts of justice. Thus, in cases of illegal contracts, or those in which one party has placed property in the hands of another for illegal purposes, as for smuggling, if the latter refuses to account for the proceeds, and fraudulently or unjustly withholds them, the former must abide by his loss; for, *In pari delicto melior est conditio possidentis, et defendentis*, is a maxim of public policy equally respected in courts of law and courts of equity.⁸ And, on the other hand,

¹ Francis, Max. Introd. 6, 7.

² Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3; 1 Hovend. on Frauds, Introd. p. 12, 13.

³ Ibid.; 1 Dane's Abridg. ch. 9, art. 1, § 2.

⁴ Heard v. Stanford, Cas. Temp. Talb. 174.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ See *Whitton v. Russell*, 1 Atk. 448, 449; 1 Madd. Ch. Pr. 39; id. 45, 46; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 214; Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 F. 8; 1 Fonbl. B. 1, ch. 3, § 7, and note (x); Francis, Max. M. 9, § 4.

⁷ 1 Madd. Ch. Pr. 35; *Popham v. Bamfield*, 1 Vern. 83; *Lord Falkland v. Bertie*, 2 Vern. 333; 7 Dane's Abridg. ch. 225, art. 4, § 6.

⁸ *Holman v. Johnson*, Cowper, 341; *Armstrong v. Toler*, 11 Wheaton, 258; *Hannay v. Eve*, 3 Cranch, 242; *Grounds and Rudim. of the Law, M.* 347, p. 260, edit. 1751; 7 Dane's Abridg. ch. 226, art. 18; *Smith v. Bromley*, Doug. 696, note. The civil law has a like maxim, — *Paria delicta mutua compensationem tolluntur*. Breviar. Advocat. tittle Delictum. *Paria sunt non esse aliquid, vel non esse legitime*. Id. *Paria*; *Batty v. Chester*, 5 Beavan, 103.

where the fraud is perpetrated by one party only, still, if it involves a public crime, and redress cannot be obtained, except by a discovery of the facts from him personally, the law will not compel him to accuse himself of a crime; and therefore the case is one of irremediable injury.¹

§ 62. These are but a few among many instances, which might be selected, to establish the justice of the remark, that even in cases professedly within the scope of equity jurisdiction, such as fraud, accident, and trust, there are many exceptions; and that all that can be ascribed to such general allegations, is general truth.² The true nature and extent of equity jurisdiction, as at present administered, must be ascertained by a specific enumeration of its actual limits in each particular class of cases, falling within its remedial justice.³ This will, accordingly, be done in the subsequent pages.

[* § 63. We may here notice some of those maxims and general axioms, which are of frequent recurrence in the discussion of equity jurisprudence.]

§ 64. In the first place it is a common maxim, that equity follows the law, *Æquitas sequitur legem*.⁴ This maxim is susceptible of various interpretations. It may mean, that equity adopts and follows the rules of law in all cases, to which those rules may, in terms, be applicable; or it may mean, that equity, in dealing with cases of an equitable nature, adopts and follows the analogies furnished by the rules of law.⁵ Now, the maxim is true in both of these senses, as applied to different cases and different circumstances. It is universally true in neither sense; or rather, it is

¹ Grounds and Rudim. of the Law, Introd. 6, 7; id. M. 306, p. 225, edit. 1751; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 6, ch. 3, § 5.

² See Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 F. 1 to 9; 7 Dane's Abridg. ch. 225, § 6; 1 Wooddes. Lect. vii. p. 200 to 215. See Clough v. Ratcliffe, 1 De Gex & Smale, 164.

³ Dr. Dane, in his Abridgment and Digest, has devoted two large chapters to the consideration of the System and Practice of Equity, especially in the Courts of the United States. The diligent student will not fail to avail himself of this ample source of information. 7 Dane's Abridg. ch. 225, 226, from p. 516 to 639.

⁴ 1 Dane's Abridg. ch. 9 art. 1, § 2; Grounds and Rudim. of the Law, M. 9 (edit. 1751). See Earl of Bath v. Sherwin, 10 Mod. 1, 3; Cowper v. Cowper, 2 P. Will. 753.

⁵ 3 Wooddes. Lect. lvi. p. 479 to 482.

not of universal application.¹ Where a rule, either of the common or the statute law, is direct, and governs the case with all its circumstances, or the particular point, a court of equity is as much bound by it, as a court of law, and can as little justify a departure from it.² If the law commands, or prohibits a thing to be done equity cannot enjoin the contrary, or dispense with the obligation. Thus, since the law has declared, in England, that the eldest son shall take by descent the whole undivided estate of his parent, a court of equity cannot disregard the canon of descent; but must give full effect and vigor to it in all controversies, in which the title is asserted.³ And yet, there are cases in which equity will control the legal title of an heir, general or special, when it would be deemed absolute at law; and in which, therefore, so far from following the law, it openly abandons it. Thus, if a tenant in tail, not knowing the fact, should, upon his marriage, make a settlement on his wife, and the heir in tail should engross the settlement, and conceal the fact, although at law his title would be absolute, a court of equity would award a perpetual injunction against asserting it to the prejudice of the settlement.⁴ So, if an heir-at-law should, by parol, promise his father to pay his sisters' portions, if he would not direct timber to be felled to raise them; although discharged at law, he would in equity be deemed liable to pay them, in the same way, as if they had been charged on the land.⁵ And many cases of a like nature may be put.⁶

¹ Sir Thomas Clarke (Master of the Rolls), in one of his elaborate opinions, has remarked in regard to uses and trusts, that, at law, the legal operation controls the intent; but, in equity, the intent controls the legal operation of the deed. *Burgess v. Wheate*, 1 W. Black. 137.

² *Kemp v. Pryor*, 7 Ves. 249 to 251; 2 Bac. Abridg. Court of Chancery, C.

³ *Grounds and Rudim. of the Law*, M. 9, p. 16 (edit. 1751); *Doct. and Stud. Dial.* 1, ch. 20.

⁴ *Raw v. Potts*, Prec. Ch. 35; s. c. 2 Vern. 239.

⁵ *Dalton v. Poole*, 1 Vent. 318.

⁶ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 4; *Hobbs v. Norton*, 1 Vern. 136; *Neville v. Wilkinson*, 1 Bro. Ch. C. 543; *Devenish v. Baines*, Prec. Ch. 3; *Oldham v. Litchfield*, 2 Freem. 285; *Thynn v. Thynn*, 1 Vern. 296; 11 Ves. 638, 639; *Gilb. Lex. Prætor*, 336; *Sugden, Vendors* (7th edit.), p. 717, 718; 3 Wooddes. Lect. lix. p. 479 to 482; id. 486, 490, 491. These cases proceed upon the ground of suppressing fraud, by not allowing a party to use a mere technical advantage for the accomplishment of positive injustice; and in a manner which the law never contemplated. So that equity here does not dispense with the law, but merely supplies its defects.

§ 64 *a.* So, in many cases, equity acts by analogy to the rules of law in relation to equitable titles and estates. Thus, although the statutes of limitations are in their terms applicable to courts of law only; yet equity, by analogy, acts upon them, and refuses relief under like circumstances. Equity always discountenances laches; and holds, that laches is presumable in cases where it is positively declared at law. Thus, in cases of equitable titles in land, equity requires relief to be sought within the same period in which an ejectment would lie at law; and, in cases of personal claims, it also requires relief to be sought within the period prescribed for personal suits of a like nature.¹ And yet there are cases, in which the statutes would be a bar at law, but in which equity would, notwithstanding, grant relief; and on the other hand, there are cases, where the statutes would not be a bar at law, but where equity, notwithstanding, would refuse relief.² But all these cases stand on special circumstances, which courts of equity can take notice of when courts of law may be bound by the positive bar of the statutes. And there are many other cases, where the rules of law and equity, on similar subjects, are not exactly coextensive, as to the recognition of rights, or the maintenance of remedy.³ Thus, a person may be tenant by the courtesy of his wife's trust estate; but she is not entitled to dower in his trust estate.⁴ So, where a power is defectively executed, equity will often aid it; whereas, at law, the act is wholly nugatory.⁵

§ 64 *b.* Other illustrations of the same maxim may be drawn from the known analogies of legal and trust estates. In general, in courts of equity, the same construction and effect are given to perfect or executed trust estates, as are given by courts of law to

¹ Blanshard on Limit. ch. 4, p. 61; *Edsell v. Buchanan*, 2 Ves. Jr. 83; Com. Dig. Chanc. 1; Mitford, Eq. Pl. 269 to 274; 1 Madd. Ch. Pr. 79, 80; 2 Madd. Ch. Pr. 244; *Smith v. Clay*, 3 Bro. Ch. 640, note; *Cholmondeley v. Clinton*, 2 Jac. & Walb. 156; *post*, § 529.

² See *Pickering v. Lord Stamford*, 2 Ves. Jr. 279; *id.* 582; 2 Madd. Ch. Pr. 244 to 247; Mitford, Eq. Pl. 269 to 274; Blanshard on Limit. ch. 4, p. 61, 81, 82, 83; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 27, note (*q*); *Stackhouse v. Barnston*, 10 Ves. 466; *Bond v. Hopkins*, 1 Sch. & Lef. 413; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*g*); *Cowper v. Cowper*, 2 P. Will. 753.

³ See *Earl of Bath v. Sherwin*, 10 Mod. 1, 3; S. C. 1 Bro. Parl. C. 270; Doc. and Stud. Dial. 1, ch. 20.

⁴ *Cruise*, Dig. tit. 12, ch. 2, § 15; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 9, note (*t*).

⁵ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, and note *ibid.*; *id.* B. ch. 4, § 25, note (*h*).

legal estates. The incidents, properties, and consequences of the estates are the same. The same restrictions are applied, as to creating estates, and bounding perpetuities, and giving absolute dominion over property. The same modes of construing the language and limitations of the trusts are adopted.¹ But there are exceptions, as well known as the rule itself. Thus, executory trusts are treated as susceptible of various modifications and constructions, not applicable to executed trusts.² And even at law, the words in a will are or may be differently construed, when applied to personal estate, from what they are when applied to real estate. In short, it may be correctly said, that the maxim, that equity follows the law, is a maxim liable to many exceptions; and that it cannot be generally affirmed, that, where there is no remedy at law in the given case, there is none in equity; or, on the other hand, that equity, in the administration of its own principles, is utterly regardless of the rules of law.³

§ 64 *c.* Another maxim is, that where there is equal equity, the law must prevail.⁴ And this is generally true; for, in such a case, the defendant has an equal claim to the protection of a court of equity for his title, as the plaintiff has to the assistance of the court to assert his title; and then, the court will not interpose on either side; for the rule there is, “*In æquali jure melior est conditio possidentis.*”⁵ And the equity is equal between persons, who have been equally innocent and equally diligent. It is upon this account, that a court of equity constantly refuses to interfere, either for relief or discovery, against a *bonâ fide* purchaser of the legal estate for a valuable consideration, with notice of the adverse title, if he chooses to avail himself of the defence at the proper time and in the proper mode.⁶ And it extends its protection

¹ 3 Wooddes. Lect. lix. p. 479 to 482; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 1, p. 147, note (b); Cowper v. Cowper, 2 P. Will. 753.

² 3 Wooddes. Lect. lix. p. 480 to 482; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 1, p. 147, note (b).

³ Kemp v. Pryor, 7 Ves. 249, 250.

⁴ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, and note; id. ch. 5, § 3; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 6, ch. 3, § 3, and note (c); id. B. 3, ch. 3, § 1; Mitford, Eq. Pl. 274; Jeremy, Eq. Jurisd. 285; Fitzsimmons v. Ogden, 7 Cranch, 2, 18; Caldwell v. Ball, 1 T. R. 214.

⁵ Mitf. Eq. Pl. [215] 274; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25; id. ch. 5, § 3; 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 170, 171; Jeremy on Equity Jurisd. 283; Jerrard v. Saunders, 2 Ves. Jr. 454; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 3, § 1.

⁶ See Sugden on Vendors (7th edit.), ch. 16, p. 713, &c. § 10; id. ch. 18, p.

equally, if the purchase is originally of an equitable title without notice, and afterwards, with notice, the party obtains or buys in a prior legal title, in order to support his equitable title.¹ This doctrine applies strictly in all cases, where the title of the plaintiff, seeking relief, is equitable. But it yet remains a matter of some doubt, whether it is applicable to the case of a plaintiff, seeking relief upon a legal title.² The purchaser, however, in all cases, must hold a legal title, or be entitled to call for it in order to give him a full protection of his defence; for, if his title be merely equitable, then he must yield to a legal and equitable title in the adverse party.³ So, the purchaser must have paid his purchase-money before notice, for otherwise he will not be protected; and if he have paid a part only, he will be protected *pro tanto* only.⁴

757, 762, 763; Grounds and Rudim. of the Law, M. 236 (edit. 1751); Story on Eq. Pl. § 603, 604, 805, 806.

¹ See Sugden on Vendors (7th edit.), ch. 16, p. 713, 728; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, note (e); *post*, § 108, 139, 154, 265, 381, 409, 434, 436; Grosvenor v. Allen, 9 Paige, 74, 76, 77.

² Sugden on Vendors, ch. 18 (7th edit.), p. 762, 763; *id.* ch. 18, 2 vol. 309, 310 (9th edit.); Jeremy Eq. Juris. 285. It is an apparent anomaly in the general doctrine, that it should be inapplicable to a bill for relief founded on a legal title. Against such a bill, Lord Thurlow decided that a plea of a *bond fide* purchase, without notice, was no protection; Williams v. Lambe, 3 Bro. Ch. C. 264. Lord Loughborough seems to have entertained a different opinion; and the point has been contested by some elementary writers and supported by others. Mr. Belt, in his note to the case, 3 Bro. Ch. C. 264, insists on Lord Thurlow's doctrine being right; so do Mr. Roper, and Mr. Beams. But Mr. Sugden treats it as incorrect. See Jerrard v. Saunders, 2 Ves. Jr. 454, 458; Sugden on Vendors (7th edit.), 762, 763; *id.* ch. 18 (9th edit.), 2 vol. 309, 310; Roper, Husband and Wife, 446, 447; *post*, § 410, note (1); *id.* § 436, 630, 631. In Collins v. Archer, 1 Russ. & Mylne, 284, 292, Sir John Leach followed the case of Williams v. Lambe; and held, that the fact that the party was a *bond fide* purchaser for a valuable consideration without notice, was not available as a defence against a plaintiff, who relies upon a legal title. On the other hand, Lord Abinger, in Payne v. Compton (2 Y. & Coll. 457, 461), held, that such a purchase was a good defence against any claim in equity by the owner of the legal estate. See also Wood v. Man, 1 Sumner, 504.

³ Sugden on Vendors (7th edit.), and *id.* ch. 18 (9th edit.), 2 vol. p. 309, 310; *id.* ch. 18, p. 757 to 763; Grounds and Rudim. of the Law, M. 236 (edit. 1751); Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 W. 12; Davies v. Austen, 1 Ves. Jr. 247; Shirras v. Caig, 7 Cranch, 34; Whitfield v. Fausset, 1 Ves. 387; Jeremy on Equity Jurisd. 285.

⁴ Wood v. Mann, 1 Sumner, 506, 578; Flagg v. Mann, 2 Sumner, 487; *post*, § 1502.

§ 64 *d*. But, even when the title of each party is purely equitable, it does not always follow that the maxim admits of no preference of the one over the other. For, where the equities are in other respects equal, still another maxim may prevail, which is "Qui prior est in tempore, potior est in jure;" for precedency in time will, under many circumstances, give an advantage, or priority in right.¹ Hence, when the legal estate is outstanding, equitable encumbrances must be paid according to priority of time.² And whenever the equities are unequal, there the preference is constantly given to the superior equity.³

§ 64 *e*. Another maxim of no small extent is, that he who seeks equity, must do equity.⁴ This maxim principally applies to the party, who is seeking relief, in the character of a plaintiff in the court. Thus, for instance, if a borrower of money upon usurious interest seeks to have the aid of a court of equity in cancelling, or procuring the instrument to be delivered up, the court will not interfere in his favor, unless upon the terms, that he will pay the lender what is really and *bond fide* due to him. But if the lender comes into equity, to assert and enforce his own claim under the instrument; there the borrower may show the invalidity of the instrument, and have a decree in his favor and a dismissal of the bill, without paying the lender any thing, for the court will never assist a wrong-doer in effectuating his wrongful and illegal purpose.⁵ And the like principles will govern in other similar cases, where the transaction is not, as between the parties, grossly fraudulent, or otherwise liable to just exception.⁶ Many

¹ 1 Fonbl. Equity, B. 1, ch. 4, § 25; *Fitzsimmons v. Ogden*, 7 Cranch, 2; *Berry v. Mutual Ins. Co.* 2 Johns. Ch. 608; *Beckett v. Cordley*, 1 Brown, Ch. 358; *Mackreth v. Symmons*, 15 Ves. 354; *Berry v. Mutual Ins. Co.* 2 Johns. Ch. 608. See *post*, § 421 *a*; *Muir v. Schenck*, 3 Hill, N. Y. 228; *Cherry v. Monro*, 2 Barb. Ch. 618; *Van Meter v. McFaddin*, 8 B. Monroe, 435.

² *Ibid.* note (*e*). See *Blake v. Hungerford*, Prec. Ch. 158.

³ *Jeremy, Eq. Jurisd.* 285, 286.

⁴ *Grounds and Rudim. of the Law*, M. 175; *id.* 179 (edit. 1751); *Com. Dig.* Chan. 3 F. 3; *McDonald v. Neilson*, 2 Cowp. 139; *Farr v. Sheriffe*, 4 Hare, 521; *Hanson v. Keating*, 4 *id.* 4; *Bowser v. Colby*, 1 *id.* 143; *iSecret v. McKenna*, 1 Strob. Eq. 356; 7 B. Monroe, 571.

⁵ *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (h)*; *id.* B. 1, ch. 2, § 13; *Mason v. Gardiner*, 4 Bro. Ch. C. 437.

⁶ *Peacock v. Evans*, 16 Ves. 512; *Grounds and Rudim. of the Law*, M. 175, 179 (edit. 1751).

other illustrations of the maxim of a different nature, may readily be put. As, where a second encumbrancer seeks relief against a prior encumbrancer, who has a claim to tack a subsequent security, he shall not have it before paying both securities. So, where a husband seeks to recover his wife's property and he has made no settlement upon her, he shall not have it without making a suitable settlement. So, where an heir seeks possession of deeds in the possession of a jointress, he shall not have relief, unless upon the terms of confirming her jointure. So, where a party seeks the benefit of a purchase made for him in the name of a trustee, who has paid the purchase-money, but to whom he is indebted for other advances, he shall not be relieved but upon payment of all the money due to the trustee.¹

§ 64 f. Another maxim of general use is, that equality is

¹ Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 F. 3; *Sturgis v. Champneys*, 5 Mylne & Craig, 97, 101, 102. In this case Lord Cottenham said: "Undoubtedly, for many purposes, this court, acting upon the principle of following the law, deals with property coming under its cognizance from the legal estate being outstanding, according to the rights which would exist at law; but that is far from being universally true. *Cholmondeley v. Clinton* (2 Mer. 171; 2 J. & W. 1), and the authorities upon which that decision was founded, are instances to the contrary. There are many cases in which this court will not interfere with a right which the possession of a legal title gives, although the effect be directly opposed to its own principles as administered between parties having equitable interests only, such as in case of subsequent encumbrancers, without notice, gaining a preference over a prior encumbrancer by procuring the legal estate. It may be to be regretted, that the rights of property should thus depend upon accident, and be decided upon, not according to any merits, but upon grounds purely technical. This, however, has arisen from the jurisdiction of law and equity being separate, and from the rules of equity (better adapted than the simplicity of the common law to the complicated transactions of the present state of society), though applied to subjects without its own exclusive jurisdiction, not having, in many cases, been extended to control matters properly subject to the jurisdiction of the courts of common law. Hence arises the extensive and beneficial rule of this court, that he who asks for equity must do equity; that is, this court refuses its aid to give to the plaintiff what the law would give him if the courts of common law had jurisdiction to enforce it, without imposing upon him conditions which the court considers he ought to comply with, although the subject of the condition should be one which this court would not otherwise enforce. If, therefore, this court refuses to assist a husband who has abandoned his wife, or the assignee of an insolvent husband who claims against both, in recovering property of the wife, without securing out of it for her a proper maintenance and support, it not only does not violate any principle, but acts in strict conformity with a rule by which it regulates its proceedings in other cases."

equity; or, as it is sometimes expressed, equity delighteth in equality.¹ And this equality, according to Bracton, constitutes equity itself; “*Æquitas est rerum convenientia, quæ paribus in causis paria jura desiderat, et omnia vere co-æquiparat, et dicitur æquitas, quasi æqualitas.*”² This maxim is variously applied; as, for example, to cases of contribution between co-contractors, sureties, and others; to cases of abatement of legacies, where there is a deficiency of assets; to cases of apportionment of moneys due on encumbrances among different purchasers and claimants of different parcels of the land; and especially to cases of the marshalling and distribution of equitable assets.³ For, although out of legal assets payment must be made of debts, in the course of administration, according to their dignity and priority of right; yet, as to equitable assets, all debts are generally deemed by courts of equity to stand *in pari jure*, and are to be paid proportionally, without reference to their dignity, or priority of right at law.⁴ And here we have another illustration of the doctrine, that equity does not always follow the law.⁵

§ 64 *g.* Another, and the last, maxim which it seems necessary to notice, is, that equity looks upon that as done, which ought to have been done. The true meaning of this maxim is, that equity will treat the subject-matter, as to collateral consequences, and incidents, in the same manner as if the final acts contemplated by the parties had been executed exactly as they ought to have been; not as the parties might have executed them.⁶ But equity will not thus consider things in favor of all persons; but only in favor of such as have a right to pray that the acts might be done.⁷ And

¹ Grounds and Rudim. of the Law, M. 91 (edit. 1751); *Petit v. Smith*, 1 P. Will. 9; *Hulme v. Chitty*, 9 Beavan, 437.

² Bracton, Lib. 1, cap. 3, § 20; Plowden, Comm. 467; Co. Litt. 24.

³ Grounds and Rudim. of the Law, M. 91 (edit. 1751); 1 Wooddes. Lect. lvi. p. 486, 487, 488, 490; *Shepherd v. Guernsey*, 9 Paige, 357.

⁴ 3 Wooddes. Lect. lviii. p. 466 to 468; *Shepherd v. Guernsey*, 9 Paige, 357.

⁵ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1, and note; 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 466; *Martin v. Martin*, 1 Ves. 211; 2 Black. Comm. 511, 512; *Lewin v. Okeley*, 2 Atk. 50; *Newton v. Bennet*, 1 Brown, Ch. Cas. 185; *Silk v. Prime*, 1 Bro. Ch. Cas. 138, note; *Hazlewood v. Pope*, 3 P. Will. 322; *Moses v. Murgatroyd*, 1 Johns. Ch. 119; *Livingston v. Newkirk*, 3 Johns. Ch. 319.

⁶ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 9; Francis, Maxims, M. 196 (edit. 1751); 1 W. Black. 129. See *Atwood v. Vincent*, 17 Conn. 575.

⁷ *Burgess v. Wheate*, 1 W. Black. 123, 129; *Crabtree v. Bramble*, 3 Atk. 987; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 9, note (s).

the rule itself is not, in other respects, of universal application; although Lord Hardwicke said that it holds in every case except in dower.¹ The most common cases of the application of the rule are under agreements. All agreements are considered as performed, which are made for a valuable consideration, in favor of persons entitled to insist upon their performance. They are to be considered as done at the time when, according to the tenor thereof, they ought to have been performed. They are, also, deemed to have the same consequences attached to them; so that one party, or his privies, shall not derive benefit by his laches or neglect; and the other party, for whose profit the contract was designed, or his privies, shall not suffer thereby.² Thus, money covenanted, or devised, to be laid out in land, is treated as real estate in equity, and descends to the heir. And, on the other hand, where land is contracted, or devised, to be sold, the land is considered and treated as money.³ There are exceptions to the doctrine, where other equitable considerations intervene, or where the intent of the parties leads the other way; but these demonstrate rather than shake, the potency of the general rule.⁴

§ 64 h. There are, also, one or two rules, as to the extent of maintaining jurisdiction, which deserve notice in this place, as they apply to various descriptions of cases, and pervade whole branches of Equity Jurisprudence, and cannot, therefore, with propriety, be exclusively arranged under any one head.

§ 64 i. One rule is, that, if, originally, the jurisdiction has properly attached in equity in any case, on account of the supposed defect of remedy at law, that jurisdiction is not changed or obliterated by the courts of law now entertaining jurisdiction in such cases, when they formerly rejected it. This has been repeatedly asserted by courts of equity, and constitutes, in some sort, the pole-star of portions of its jurisdiction. The reason is, that it cannot be left to courts of law to enlarge or to restrain the powers

¹ *Crabtree v. Bramble*, 3 Atk. 687.

² *Grounds and Rudim. of the Law*, M. 106 (edit. 1751).

³ 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 6, § 9 note (t); *Gilbert, Lex Prætor*, 243, 244; *Fletcher v. Ashburner*, 1 Bro. Ch. C. 497; *Craig v. Leslie*, 3 *Wheat.* 563, 577;

⁴ *Wooddes. Lect. lvi. p.* 466, 468.

⁵ *Ibid.* The whole of this doctrine was very much considered by the Supreme Court, in the case of *Craig v. Leslie*, 3 *Wheaton*, 563, where a very elaborate opinion was delivered by Mr. Justice Washington.

of courts of equity at their pleasure. The jurisdiction of equity, like that of law, must be of a permanent and fixed character. There can be no ebb or flow of jurisdiction, dependent upon external changes. Being once vested legitimately in the court, it must remain there, until the legislature shall abolish, or limit it; for without some positive act, the just inference is, that the legislative pleasure is, that the jurisdiction shall remain upon its old foundations. This doctrine has been a good deal canvassed in modern times; and it has been especially the subject of commentary by some of the greatest equity judges who have ever adorned the Bench.¹ Lord Eldon upon one occasion said, "Upon what principle can it be said [that] the ancient jurisdiction of this court is destroyed, because courts of law now, very properly, perhaps, exercise that jurisdiction which they did not exercise forty years ago? Demands have been frequently recovered in equity, which now could be without difficulty recovered at law, &c. I cannot hold, that the jurisdiction is gone, merely because the courts of law have exercised an equitable jurisdiction."²

§ 64 *k*. Another rule respects the exercise of jurisdiction, when the title is at law, and the party comes into equity for a discovery, and for a relief, as consequent on that discovery. In many cases it has been held, that, where a party has a just title to come into equity for a discovery, and obtains it, the court will go on, and give him the proper relief; and not turn him round to the expenses and inconveniences of a double suit at law. The jurisdiction having once rightfully attached, it shall be made effectual for the purposes of complete relief. And it has accordingly been laid down by elementary writers of high reputation, that "The court, having acquired cognizance of the suit for the purpose of discovery, will entertain it, for the purpose of relief, in most cases of fraud, account, accident, and mistake."³ The ground is stated to be the propriety of preventing a multiplicity of suits;⁴ a ground,

¹ See *Atkinson v. Leonard*, 3 Bro. Ch. 218; *Ex parte Greenway*, 6 Ves. 812; *East India Company v. Boddam*, 9 Ves. 468, 469; *Bromeley v. Holland*, 7 Ves. 19 to 21; *Cooper, Eq. Pl. ch. 3*, p. 126, 129. See also *Biddle v. Moore*, 3 Barr. 161.

² *Kemp v. Pryor*, 7 Ves. 249, 250.

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*); *Coop. Eq. Pl. Introd.* p. xxxi.; *Middletown Bank v. Russ*, 3 Conn. 135.

⁴ The passage from Fonblanque on Equity deserves to be quoted at large. "The concurrence of jurisdiction may, in the greater number of cases in which

of itself quite reasonable, and sufficient to justify the relief, and one upon which courts of equity act, as a distinct ground of original jurisdiction.¹

it is exercised, be justified by the propriety of preventing a multiplicity of suits; for, as the mode of proceeding in courts of law requires the plaintiff to establish his case without enabling him to draw the necessary evidence from the examination of the defendant, justice could never be attained at law in those cases where the principal facts to be proved by one party are confined to the knowledge of the other party. In such cases, therefore, it becomes necessary for the party wanting such evidence to resort to the extraordinary powers of a court of equity, which will compel the necessary discovery; and the court, having acquired cognizance of the suit for the purpose of discovery, will entertain it for the purpose of relief, in most cases of fraud, account, accident, and mistake."

¹ See *Jesus College v. Bloom*, 3 Atk. 262, 263. In *Pearce v. Creswick*, 2 Hare, 293, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Wigram said: "The first proposition relied upon by the plaintiff in support of the equity of his bill was this, that the case was one in which the right to discovery would carry with it the right to relief. And, undoubtedly, *dicta* are to be met with tending directly to the conclusion, that the right to discovery may entitle a plaintiff to relief also. In *Adley v. The Whitstable Company* (17 Ves. 329), Lord Eldon says: 'There is no mode of ascertaining what is due except an account in a court of equity; but, it is said, the party may have discovery and then go to law. The answer to that is, that the right to the discovery carries along with it the right to relief in equity.' In *Byle v. Haggie* (1 Jac. & Walk. 236), Sir Thomas Plumer said: 'When it is admitted that a party comes here properly for the discovery, the court is never disposed to occasion a multiplicity of suits by making him go to a court of law for the relief.' And in *McKenzie v. Johnston* (4 Mad. 373), Sir J. Leach says: 'The plaintiff can only learn from this discovery of the defendants how they have acted in the execution of their agency, and it would be most unreasonable that he should pay them for that discovery if it turned out that they had abused his confidence; yet such must be the case if a bill for relief will not lie.'

"Now, in a case in which I think that justice requires the court, if possible, to find an equity in this bill, to enable it, once for all, to decide the question between the parties, I should reluctantly deprive the plaintiff of any remedy to which the *dicta* I have referred to may entitle him. But I confess the arguments founded upon these *dicta* appear to me to be exposed to the objection of proving far too much. They can only be reconciled with the ordinary practice of the court, by understanding them as having been uttered with reference in each case to the subject-matter to which they were applied, and not as laying down any abstract proposition so wide as the plaintiff's argument requires. I think this part of the plaintiff's case cannot be stated more highly in his favor than this, that the necessity a party may be under (from the very nature of a given transaction) to come into equity for discovery, is a circumstance to be regarded in deciding upon the distinct and independent question of equitable jurisdiction; further than this I have not been able to follow this branch of the plaintiff's argument."

§ 65. It is observable, that the guarded language used is, "in most cases," although it is certainly difficult to perceive any solid ground, why the jurisdiction should not extend to all cases, embraced by the general principle. But the qualification is made with reference to the bearing of some of the authorities. The learned author of the *Treatise on Equity*¹ has laid down the principle in the broadest terms. "And when" (says he) "this court can determine the matter, it shall not be a handmaid to the other courts; nor beget a suit to be ended elsewhere."² There are many authorities which go to support this proposition. But there are many, also, which are irreconcilable with it, or at least which contain exceptions to it.

§ 66. Mr. Fonblanque has remarked: "There are some cases, in which, though the plaintiff might be relieved at law, a court of equity, having obtained jurisdiction for the purpose of discovery, will entertain the suit for the purpose of relief. But there certainly are other cases, where, though the plaintiff may be entitled to discovery he is not entitled to relief. To strike out the distinguishing principle, upon which courts of equity in such cases have proceeded, would be extremely useful. But, after having given considerable attention to the subject, I find myself incapable of reconciling the various decisions upon it."³ What the learned author desired to ascertain, has been found equally embarrassing to subsequent inquirers; and there is a distressing uncertainty in this branch of equity jurisdiction in England.⁴

§ 67. In cases of account, there seems a distinct ground upon which the jurisdiction for discovery should incidentally carry the jurisdiction for relief. In the first place, the remedy at law, in most cases of this sort, is imperfect or inadequate. In the next place, where this objection does not occur, the discovery sought must often be obtained through the instrumentality of a master, or of some interlocutory order of the court; in which case it would seem strange, that the court should grant some, and not proceed to full, relief.⁵ In the next place, in cases not falling

¹ Mr. Ballow.

² 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 6, ch. 3, § 6. This is the very language of the Lord Keeper (afterward Lord Chancellor Nottingham), in *Parker v. Dee*, 2 Ch. Cas. 200, 201.

³ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 6, ch. 3, § 6, note (r).

⁴ Coop. Eq. Pl. ch. 3, § 3, p. 188, 189.

⁵ 3 Black. Comm. 437; Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, p. 119, 120, 123; *Corporation of Carlisle v. Wilson*, 13 Ves. 278, 279.

under either of these predicaments, the compelling of the production of vouchers and documents would seem to belong peculiarly to a court of equity, and to be a species of relief. And, in the last place, where neither of the foregoing principles applies, there is great force in the ground of suppressing multiplicity of suits, constituting, as it does, a peculiar ground for the interference of equity.¹

§ 68. Cases of accident and mistake furnish like reasons for extending the jurisdiction to relief where it attaches for discovery. The remedy at law is not in such cases (as we shall presently see) either complete or appropriate. And cases of fraud are least of all those in which the complete exercise of the jurisdiction of a court of equity in granting relief ought to be questioned or controlled; since, in addition to all other reasons, fraud constitutes the most ancient foundation of its power; and equity sifts the conscience of the party, not only by requiring his own answer under oath, but by subjecting it to the severe scrutiny of comparison with other competent testimony; thus narrowing the chances of successful evasion, and compelling the party to do equity, as it shall appear upon a full survey of the whole transaction. Indeed, in many cases of fraud, what should be the nature and extent of the redress, whether it should be wholly legal or wholly equitable or a mixture of both, can scarcely be decided, but upon a full hearing upon all the proceedings in the cause.

§ 69. But there are cases, if not leading authorities, which it is not easy to reconcile with the principles already stated in matters of fraud, accident, mistake, and account.² Some of them may have been adjudged upon their own peculiar circumstances; or they may stand upon some ground which leaves these principles untouched. Others are not susceptible of such a classification,

¹ See *Jesus College v. Bloom*, 3 Atk. 262; s. c. *Ambler*, 54. The full concurrency of jurisdiction of courts of equity for relief in all matters of account, whether there be a remedy at law or not, seems to have been largely insisted on by Lord Erskine, in *The Corporation of Carlisle v. Wilson* (13 Ves. 278, 279). And it was positively asserted by the Court of Errors in New York, in *Ludlow v. Simond* (2 Caines, Cas. in Err. 38, 39, 53, 54). In *Ryle v. Haggie* (1 Jac. & Walk. 234), the Master of the Rolls said: "When it is admitted that a party comes here properly for a discovery, the court is never disposed to occasion a multiplicity of suits by making him go to a court of law for relief."

² 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 6, ch. 3, § 6, note (r).

and must either be rejected altogether, or be admitted to a considerable extent to overturn these principles.¹

¹ In *Parker v. Dee* (2 Chan. Cas. 200), the bill was against an executor for a discovery of assets and payment; and relief was decreed by Lord Nottingham. In *Bishop of Winchester v. Knight* (1 P. Will. 406), the bill was for a discovery and an account of ore, dug by a tenant during his life, and by his heir, against the executor and heir; and the court maintained the suit, directing a trial at law, and after the trial granted relief. In *Story v. Lord Windsor* (2 Atk. 630), the bill was for an account of the profits of a colliery, upon a legal title asserted by the plaintiff. Lord Hardwicke sustained the bill for the account because (he said) this is not a title of land, but of a colliery, which is a kind of trade; and therefore an account of the profits may be taken here. (See also *Jesus College v. Bloom*, 3 Atk. 262). The same learned chancellor, in *Sayer v. Pierce* (1 Ves. 232), seems to have proceeded on the same ground, holding, that the party being out of possession of lands, generally, was not entitled to maintain a bill for an account of profits alone; but he retained the bill in that case, directing a trial at law upon the ground, that it asked to ascertain boundaries. In *Lee v. Alston* (1 Br. Ch. 194), a bill for an account of timber, cut by a tenant for life, impeachable for waste, was entertained by Lord Thurlow, and relief granted. In *Jesus College v. Bloom* (3 Atk. 262; s. c. *Ambler*, 54), which was a bill for an account and satisfaction for waste, in cutting down timber before the assignment, against an assignee of the lessee of the plaintiffs, Lord Hardwicke said: "Upon the opening of the case, the bill seems improper, and an action of trover is the proper remedy. Where the bill is for an injunction, and waste has been already committed, the court, to prevent a double suit, will decree an account and satisfaction for what is past." And because the bill sought an account only against the assignee for waste before the assignment, and without praying an injunction, his lordship dismissed the bill. The same point was held in *Smith v. Cooke* (3 Atk. 378, 381). In *Geast v. Barker* (2 Bro. Ch. 61), the bill was for a discovery of the quantity of coal and coke, sold from a mine let by plaintiff to defendant upon a reservation of one shilling for every stack of coal sold, &c., and prayed an issue to try what quantity a stack should contain, and suggested a custom of the country. The Master of the Rolls (Lord Kenyon) said, if it were now necessary either to decree account, or dismiss the bill, he would do the latter, as he was clear the remedy was at law. (s. c. cited in *Harwood v. Oglander*, 6 Ves. 225.) Why the remedy and account should not be given in equity, is not stated; and it is difficult to see; since it is clear, that the bill was good for the discovery, and it was obtained. In *Sloane v. Heatfield* (Bunb. 18), the bill was for a discovery of treasure trove, and relief; and the court held it good for discovery; but that the plaintiff could not have relief; because he might bring trover at law. In *Ryle v. Haggie* (1 Jac. & Walk. 234), an opposite course was adopted upon the professed ground of avoiding a multiplicity of suits, the party having a good ground to seek a discovery, and there being a remedy at law. In the *Duke of Leeds v. New Radnor* (2 Bro. Ch. 338, 519), Lord Thurlow reversed the decree of the Master of the Rolls, denying relief, because there was a remedy at law, upon the ground, that the bill being retained for a year, the

§ 70. But when we depart from matters of fraud, accident, mistake, and account, as the foundations of a suit in equity, it is far more difficult to ascertain the boundary, where the right of a court of equity to entertain a bill for relief, as consequent upon the jurisdiction for discovery, begins, and where it ends.¹ The difficulty is increased by the recent rule adopted in the courts of equity in England (of which we shall have occasion to speak more fully hereafter), that, if the party seeks relief, as well as discovery, and he is entitled to discovery only, a general demurrer will lie to the whole bill.² The effect of this rule is, that a plaintiff may be compelled, in a doubtful case, to frame his bill for a discovery in the first instance, and having obtained it, he may be compelled to ask leave to amend (which will not ordinarily be granted, unless it is clear, that the proper relief is in equity), and then he may try the question, whether he is entitled to relief or not.³

§ 71. In America, a strong disposition has been shown to follow out a convenient and uniform principle of jurisdiction, and to adhere to that, which seems formerly (as we have seen) to have received the approbation of Lord Nottingham.⁴ The principle is, that where the jurisdiction once attaches for discovery, and the

right to grant relief in equity was thus far admitted, and it ought to give entire relief. See Mr. Fonblanque's comments on this case, in 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1 ch. 3, § 3, note (g), p. 156. See Mr. Blunt's note to the case of *Jesus College v. Bloom, Ambler*, 54; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3, note (g); *ante*, § 64 k, and note.

¹ See *Ryle v. Haggie*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 234; *Pearce v. Creswick*, 2 Hare, 243; *post*, § 690.

² *Ante*, § 64 k, § 71 to 74; *Story*, Eq. Plead. § 312, 545. And see *Mitchell v. Greene*, 10 Met. 101. [* This case adopts the English rule upon this subject, and the opinion of HUBBARD, J., seems to exhibit, in clear light, the true reason upon which it is founded, viz. that the plaintiff must, in order to entitle himself to a discovery, set forth in his bill that it is brought to obtain a discovery only, in aid of an existing, or contemplated suit at law; and that without these allegations in the bill, the court will assume that the discovery is sought merely in aid of the relief prayed in the bill, and if that is denied, will hold that the prayer for discovery falls with it, as a mere incident. *Pease v. Pease*, 8 Met. 395; *post*, § 74, a, et seq.]

³ *Post*, § 690, 691; *Mitford*, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, p. 183, note (n); *Cooper*, Eq. Pl. ch. 1, § 3, p. 58; *id.* ch. 3, § 3, p. 188; *Story on Equity Pleadings*, § 312, and note (1); *Lousada v. Templer*, 2 Russ. 564; *Frietas v. Don Santos*, 1 Y. & Jerv. 577; *Severn v. Fletcher*, 5 Sim. 457.

⁴ *Ante*, § 65, note (3); *post*, § 691.

discovery is actually obtained, the court will farther entertain the bill for relief, if the plaintiff prays it. This has been broadly asserted in many cases,¹ and certainly possesses the recommendation of simplicity and uniformity of application; and escapes from what seems to be the capricious and unintelligible line of demarcation, pointed out in the English authorities. Thus, it has been laid down in the courts of New York, upon more than one occasion, as a settled rule, that, when the court of chancery has gained jurisdiction of a cause for one purpose, it may retain it generally for relief.² A similar doctrine has been asserted in other States;³ and it has been affirmed in the Supreme Court of the United States. On one occasion, it was laid down by the last-named court, "That, if certain facts, essential to the merits of a claim purely legal, be exclusively within the knowledge of the party, against whom that claim is asserted, he may be required in a court of chancery to disclose those facts; and the court, being thus rightly in possession of the cause, will proceed to determine the whole matter in controversy."⁴

§ 72. This doctrine, however, though generally true, is not to be deemed of universal application.⁵ To justify a court of equity in granting relief, as consequent upon discovery, in cases of this sort, it seems necessary, that the relief should be of such a nature as a court of equity may properly grant in the ordinary exercise of its authority. If, therefore, the proper relief be by an award of damages, which can alone be ascertained by a jury, there may be a strong reason for declining the exercise of the jurisdiction,⁶ since it is the appropriate function of a court of law to superintend such trials. And, in many other cases where a question arises,

¹ See *Sanborn v. Kittredge*, 20 Verm. 632. [* This, however, was where the plaintiff claimed an account, as tenant in common of personal property.]

² *Armstrong v. Gilchrist*, 2 Johns. Cas. 424; *Rathbone v. Warren*, 10 Johns. 587, 596; *King v. Baldwin*, 17 Johns. 384. See also *Leroy v. Veeder*, 1 Johns. Cas. 417; s. c. 2 Caines, Cas. in Err. 175; *Hepburn v. Dundas*, 1 Wheat. 197; *Ludlow v. Simmond*, 2 Cain. Err. 1, 38, 51, 52.

³ *Chichester's Executor v. Vas's Administrator*, 1 Munf. 98; *Isham v. Gilbert*, 3 Connect. 166; *Ferguson v. Waters*, 3 Bibb, 303; *Middleton Bank v. Russ*, 3 Connect. 139.

⁴ *Russell v. Clarke's Executors*, 7 Cranch, 69. See *Foster v. Swasey*, 2 Wood. & Min. 217.

⁵ *Middletown Bank v. Russ*, 3 Connect. 135, 140; *id.* 166.

⁶ See *Denny v. Gilman*, 26 Maine, 149.

purely of matters of fact, fit to be tried by a jury, and the relief is dependent upon that question, there is equal reason that the jurisdiction for relief should be altogether declined; or at all events, that if the bill is retained, a trial at law should be directed by the court and relief granted, or withheld, according to the final issue of the trial. [* In the English chancery practice it is allowable to try the facts in a case by a jury summoned into the chancery court, although it is said that this is not generally done, unless both parties desire it, or unless special reasons exist, such as saving expense, or delay; still it would, with us, afford the preferable mode of coming at such trial, and save much of the embarrassment of formally drawing up the issue.¹] But if a bill seeks the discovery of a contract for the sale of goods and chattels, or of a wrongful conversion of goods and chattels, and the breach of the contract, or the conversion of the goods and chattels, is properly remediable in damages, to be ascertained by a jury, the relief seems properly to belong to a court of law. In like manner, questions of fraud in obtaining and executing a will of real estate, and many cases of controverted titles to real estate, dependent partly on matters of fact, and partly on matters of law, are properly triable in an ejectment, and may well be left to the common tribunals.² And it has accordingly been laid down in some of the American courts, that under such circumstances, where the verdict of a jury is necessary to ascertain the extent of the relief, the plaintiff should be left to his action at law, after the discovery is obtained.³

§ 73. The distinction, here pointed out, furnishes a clear line for the exercise of equity jurisdiction in cases where relief is sought upon bills of discovery; and, if it should receive a general sanction in the American courts, it will greatly diminish the embarrassments, which have hitherto attended many investigations of the subject. In the present state of the authorities, however, little more can be absolutely affirmed, than these propositions; first, that in bills of discovery, seeking relief, if any part of the relief sought be of an equitable nature, the court will retain the bill for complete relief;⁴ secondly, that in matters of account,

¹ [* *Peters v. Rule*, 5 Jur. N. s. 61; s. c. 7 W. R. 171; s. c. 28 L. J. N. s. Ch. 246. See *Black v. Lamb*, 1 Beasley, Ch. 108.]

² *Jones v. Jones*, 3 Meriv. 161; *Ridgway v. Roberts*, 4 Hare, 116.

³ *Lynch v. Sumral*, 1 Marsh. (Kentucky) 469.

⁴ [* *Day v. Cummings*, 19 Vt. 496.]

fraud, mistake, and accident, the jurisdiction for relief will, generally, but not universally, be retained and favored; and thirdly, that in cases, where the remedy at law is more appropriate than the remedy in equity, or the verdict of a jury is indispensable to the relief sought, the jurisdiction will either be declined, or, if retained, will be so, subject to a trial at law.

§ 74. From what has been already stated, it is manifest, that the jurisdiction, in cases of this sort, attaches in equity solely on the ground of discovery.¹ If, therefore, the discovery is not obtained, or it is used as a mere pretence to give jurisdiction, it would be a gross abuse to entertain the suit in equity, when the whole foundation, on which it rests, is either disproved, or it is shown to be a colorable disguise for the purpose of changing the forum of litigation. Hence, to maintain the jurisdiction for relief, as consequent on discovery, it is necessary, in the first place, to allege in the bill, that the facts are material to the plaintiff's case, and that the discovery of them by the defendant is indispensable, as proof; for if the facts lie within the knowledge of witnesses, who may be called in a court of law, that furnishes a sufficient reason for a court of equity to refuse its aid. The bill must, therefore, allege (and if required, the fact must be established) that the plaintiff is unable to prove such facts by other testimony.² In the next place, if the answer wholly denies the matters of fact, of which discovery is sought by the bill, the latter must be dismissed; for the jurisdiction substantially fails by such a denial.³

[* § 74 *a*. Equity jurisdiction, as dependent upon discovery, was well said, to be "in a distressing state of uncertainty."⁴ It may justly be regarded as a desideratum, to relieve, to any extent, this uncertainty. And it seems to us to have arisen, chiefly, from not properly discriminating between that discovery which is sought in support of the bill, as evidence merely, or in aid of a suit at law;⁵ and that appeal to the conscience of the defendant, which is based

¹ See *Shepard v. Sanford*, 3 Barb. Ch. 127.

² *Gelston v. Hoyt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 543; *Seymour v. Seymour*, 4 Johns. Ch. 409; *Pryor v. Adams*, 1 Call, 382; *Duvalls v. Ross*, 2 Munf. 290, 296; *Bass v. Bass*, 4 H. & Munf. 478.

³ *Russell v. Clarke's Executors*, 7 Cranch, 69; *Ferguson v. Waters*, 3 Bibb, 303; *Nourse v. Gregory*, 3 Litt. 378; *Robinson v. Gilbreth*, 4 Bibb, 184.

[⁴ * *Ante*, § 66.

⁵ Or in anticipation of such a suit. *Lord Hardwicke*, in *Lempster v. Pomfret*, *Ambler*, 154; *Moodalay v. Morton*, 1 Br. C. C. 469.]

upon some alleged misconduct, either in withholding documents, or suppressing facts, to which the plaintiff is entitled, and which, but for the defendant's misconduct, he would have had, and which would have entitled him to redress, in a court of law. In the former case the plaintiff charges no wrong upon the defendant, so far as the discovery is concerned. He asks it as a favor, to enable him to obtain redress in equity, if the subject-matter of the suit is appropriate for such remedy, and if not, then, to enable him to demand such redress at law. And where the discovery is sought merely in aid of a suit at law, whether obtained or not, the plaintiff, upon the coming in of the answer is bound to discontinue, and pay all the expense of defendant.¹

But in a bill for discovery merely in aid of redress, and where no wrong is charged upon the defendant in withholding documents, or facts, to which the plaintiff was entitled, it is not competent for the plaintiff to pray relief, unless his case is one, which, in itself, is a proper subject of equitable relief. If his case is not of this character, he must ask the discovery, in aid of a contemplated, or pending suit at law. And if he ask relief, where his case is not proper for the interference of a court of equity, the bill is, upon that ground, demurrable. He must not only show a case, where he is entitled to discovery, but he must state the true ground of such discovery, and if he state one which, on the face of the bill, appears not tenable, his suit is demurrable.² A bill, for instance, will be sustained, in equity, in aid of a defence, at law, to a bond or other instrument, upon the ground of illegality in the consideration, when, if relief had been prayed, the bill must have been dismissed, upon the ground that the court could give no posi-

¹ *Cartwright v. Hateley*, 1 Vesey, Jr. 292, 293. See also *Simmons v. Kinnaid*, 4 Vesey, 746; 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 217, and cases cited. But if defendant, on reasonable request, refuse to make the admission, and thus drive the plaintiff into a court of equity, to obtain it, where he succeeds, the defendant is not entitled to costs. *Weymouth v. Boyer*, 1 Vesey, Jr. 416, 423; *Deas v. Harvie*, 2 Barb. Ch. 448. But such costs are sometimes taxed in the action at law. 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 217; *Grant v. Jackson*, Peake's N. P. Cas. 203. See also upon the subject of costs in bills of discovery, *Burnett v. Sanders*, 4 Johns. Ch. 504; *McElwee v. Sutton*, 1 Hill's Ch. 32; *King v. Clark*, 3 Paige, 76; *Harvey v. Tebbutt*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 197; *Fulton Bank v. N. Y. & Sh. Canal Co.*, 4 Paige, 127.

² *Ante*, § 70, notes. It will thus appear, we think, that the English rule is not fairly open to the objections urged against it. It seems to us, it is neither unreasonable, nor suicidal.

tive relief in such case.¹ All that is required to be alleged in a bill for discovery, in aid of a suit at law, is to show that the plaintiff has such a case, that the discovery sought will aid him.² And he has no right to come into a court of equity with a case of a purely legal character, unless for the mere purpose of discovery, in aid of an action at law; and if he come seeking relief, in equity, his bill should be dismissed. And this is the extent of the English rule.³ In such a case it is not requisite to allege that the plaintiff is unable to establish his case, or defence, by other witnesses, or to make any such affidavit, unless for the purpose of obtaining an injunction staying proceedings at law.⁴ As the law formerly stood, when the parties were not witnesses, either party might claim a discovery of facts, in the knowledge of his adversary, to save expense, or delay, or uncertainty. But the necessity for such bills having ceased, for the most part, both in this country and in England, this kind of discovery has become practically obsolete.⁵ And while it was in full force, it required no other check upon its abuse, than the necessity of paying all the expense of both parties, without regard to the result.⁶

§ 74 *b*. But if discovery, in this general sense, has already acquired the status of being a distinct ground of equity jurisdiction, in our American courts, it will not be relinquished because courts of law have subsequently advanced into the same sphere of trial, or relief.⁷ But it is admitted to be purely an American rule of equity jurisdiction; and it is obvious that it springs, to some extent certainly, from confounding that discovery which is merely matter of general evidence, whether sought for purposes of relief in equity, or at law, with that which is sought on account of the

¹ *Benyon v. Nettleford*, 3 Mac. & G. 94.

² *Vance v. Andrews*, 2 Barb. Ch. 370; *Deas v. Harvie*, id. 448; *Williams v. Harden*, 1 Barb. Ch. 298; *Welford*, Eq. Pl. 99; *Stainton v. Chadwick*, 3 M. & G. 575.

³ *Ante*, § 70 and notes.

⁴ *Vance v. Andrews*, 2 Barb. Ch. 370; *Appleyard v. Seton*, 16 Vesey, 223; *March v. Davison*, 9 Paige, 580; *post*, § 148-150. Those cases in the American courts, where a different rule has been laid down, as *Gelston v. Hoyt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 543; *Seymour v. Seymour*, 4 Johns. Ch. 409; *Leggett v. Postley*, 2 Paige, 599; and others following the lead of the eminent jurist who decided those cases, have been denied and overruled by the cases already cited in this note.

⁵ *Gelston v. Hoyt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 543.

⁶ *Ante*, p. 70, note 1.

⁷ *Ante*, § 64 *i*; *post*, § 80.

fraudulent conduct of defendant and where the breach of confidence is itself, when admitted, or established, a sufficient ground of equity jurisdiction;¹ and also, probably, to some extent, from pushing another maxim of equity jurisprudence quite beyond its just purport; that is, that where equity obtains jurisdiction of a cause, for any purpose, it will retain it, generally, until complete justice is effected.² But this last maxim has no proper application, unless where the court obtains legitimate jurisdiction of the *cause*, and for some reason, affecting the cause, or some portion of it. For instance, when a court of equity is properly applied to for an injunction, to restrain the infringement of a patent, it will retain the cause, and settle other matters between the parties, inseparably connected with the infringement, but which do not afford ground for original equitable jurisdiction.³

§ 74 c. But when a party comes into equity for general discovery merely, it gives the court no jurisdiction of the cause, or any part of it. Discovery is something which a party may claim in every cause, at law, whether he be plaintiff or defendant, and in every transaction which may fairly be expected to become the foundation of an action hereafter; and may claim it, without regard to his being destitute of other proof. He may claim the discovery to save expense, or uncertainty, in the other proof.⁴ So that, if such discovery were really a ground of equity jurisdiction, it would be sufficient to bring every case, properly cognizable in a court of law, for final trial, into a court of equity, since it would scarcely ever fail, if one had a good cause of action, or a good defence, that he would not be able to obtain some discovery, from his adversary, tending to support his case. It scarcely requires argument to show that so broad a rule of equity jurisdiction must fall, in consequence of its inherent absurdity.⁵ It is, we apprehend,

¹ *Post*, § 74 d.

² *Day v. Cummings*, 19 Vt. 496; *Bank of U. S. v. Biddle*, 2 Pars. Ch. 54; *McGowin v. Remington*, 12 Penn. St. 63; *Shollenberger's Appeal*, 9 Harris, 340; *Brooks v. Stolley*, 3 McLean, 523; *Traip v. Gould*, 15 Maine, 82.

³ *Brooks v. Stolley*, 3 McLean, 523. There are many similar cases, as where one partner goes into equity, to enjoin his copartners from violating the articles, that court will dispose of other matters, not properly of equitable cognizance. And so of numerous other questions which may be supposed and which are illustrated by the cases cited *ante*, § 74 b, note 2.

⁴ *Story*, Eq. Pl. § 319; *Stacy v. Pearson*, 3 Rich. Eq. 148, 152; *Mitford*, Eq. Pl. by *Jeremy*, 307. See cases cited in note to *Story*, Eq. Pl. § 319.

⁵ The rule, as claimed in some of the American cases, is very properly char-

from a sense of the innate absurdity of the rule, in this unlimited extension, that the American courts have, from time to time, sought to annex some salutary limitations upon its application. Hence we find it laid down in a large number of American cases, that it is necessary for the party, where he seeks to transfer a cause, appropriately of legal cognizance, into the forum of equity, for trial, upon the ground of seeking discovery, and that alone, to allege in his bill, and verify by affidavits, that he has no other means of proving his case.¹ But it is obvious that, to make any such fact, as the party being without other evidence, the basis of equity jurisdiction, in all cases, and that alone, it should, to be of any practical moment, be put in a traversable form, and the jurisdiction fail, upon the failure of that allegation, or upon its disproof. And this will raise another necessary qualification of the rule, that the existing proof, to defeat the jurisdiction, must be in the knowledge, or at least in the power, of the plaintiff; for unless it be, it is the same to him as if it did not exist. This inquiry, whether plaintiff was in fact destitute of other proof, would raise a very remarkable collateral issue, and one which is not susceptible of trial, and could not form an intelligible basis of equity jurisdiction.² This limitation, in regard to bills of discovery, which was in the first instance made to apply equally to all,³ has been long

acterized by Lord Cottenham, chancellor, in *Foley v. Hill*, 2 Cl. & Fin. Ho. Lds. Cas. n. s. 28, 37. This was an action of account. "It is not," says his lordship, "because you are entitled to discovery, that therefore you are entitled to an account. That is entirely a fallacy. That would, if carried to the extent . . . make it appear that every case is matter of equitable jurisdiction, and that where a plaintiff is entitled to a demand, he may come to a court of equity for a discovery. But the rule is that where a case is complicated, or where from other circumstances the remedy at law will not give adequate relief, then the court of equity assumes jurisdiction." See also *Hambrook v. Smith*, 9 Eng. L. & Eq. 226.

¹ *Gelston v. Hoyt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 543; *Merchants' Bank v. Davis*, 3 Kelly, 112; *Bank U. S. v. Biddle*, 2 Pars. Ch. 31; *Emerson v. Staton*, 3 Mon. 116, 118; *Bullock v. Boyd*, 2 A. K. Marsh. 322; *Stacy v. Pearson*, 3 Rich. Eq. 148, 152; *Laight v. Morgan*, 1 Johns. Cas. 429, s. c. 2 Caines, Cas. in Error, 344; *Lyons v. Miller*, 6 Grattan, 427, 438; *Sims v. Aughtery*, 4 Strobb. Eq. 103, 121.

² It seems to raise almost the same question, which has sometimes been put, in mere badinage, by those reformers, who object so strenuously to the separation of the tribunals administering law and equity. What would be the effect of falsifying the averment in the old English bills, "That for as much as the plaintiff's witnesses are all dead, or gone beyond seas, he is therefore compelled to sue in a court of equity?"

³ *Gelston v. Hoyt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 543.

since abandoned by the American courts, as to all such bills which do not seek to transfer a merely legal cause of action into the forum of equity, upon the ground of discovery.¹ It is obvious, in tracing the history of this American heresy, in equity law, that it owes its rise and subsequent growth, and present partial maturity, solely to what can be esteemed nothing less than a lapse, in that eminent jurist, who decided the case of *Gelston v. Hoyt*, and others in the same court, which followed in its wake.² It is perhaps not matter of surprise, that his mistakes should have been followed, when it is remembered that the distinguished New York chancellor was truly the father and founder of American equity law, as he was also, to a considerable extent, of American law, in general; and of whom it is but simple justice to say, that he laid down fewer legal propositions, which required subsequent qualification, than any other American judge, or jurist, early or late. But we are not from this to infer that he possessed the impossible human attainment, of infallibility. The opinion of Ch. J. Marshall³ is sometimes cited in confirmation of this rule. But we think it scarcely goes beyond the English rule, and probably had reference to secret trusts and fraudulent concealments,⁴ a discovery of which is still the legitimate basis of equity jurisdiction.

[* § 74 d. The only distinct ground of equity jurisdiction over cases of a purely legal character, based upon mere discovery, as we have already intimated,⁵ is, where the defendant is charged with a wrong, and a virtual fraud, in withholding the appropriate legal evidences.⁶ Sometimes such a case is founded upon the duty of defendant to disclose deeds, writings, and documents in his keeping;⁷ as where the heir claims under the deed, or is obstructed, by the attempt to set up an outstanding and false title.⁸

¹ *Ante*, § 74 a, notes 3 and 5.

² *Seymour v. Seymour*, 4 Johns. Ch. 409.

³ *Russell v. Clark's Ex'rs*, 7 Cranch, 69.

⁴ *Post*, § 74 d.

⁵ [* *Ante*, § 74 a.

⁶ In ordinary cases, in courts of equity, the plaintiff is entitled to the defendant's testimony, as matter of course. If the case made in the bill is defective, the defendant may excuse himself from the discovery. *McCoun, V. C.*, in *Kuypers v. Dutch Church*, 6 Paige, 570; *Morgan v. Harris*, 2 Br. C. C. 121, 124, where Lord Thurlow said, "You cannot demur to the discovery, unless you demur to the relief; for then you do not demur to the thing required, but you demur to the means by which it is to be attained."

⁷ *Mad. Eq. Pr.* 199, *et seq.*; *Metcalf v. Havey*, 1 Vesey, Sen. 248.

⁸ *Bond v. Hopkins*, 1 Sch. & Lef. 428, 429; *Tanner v. Wise*, 3 P. Wms. 296, 296.

So a bill of this class will lie against one who conceals a bankrupt's estate;¹ or where a confusion of boundaries has occurred through the fault of defendant;² or where the defendant declines to give knowledge of the goods put on board a ship insured and lost.³ In these cases of trust and confidence, and fraudulent breach of duty, equity will entertain a bill for discovery, to enable the plaintiff to learn what are his rights, and will then retain the case, and grant relief. So, also, equity will compel the production of a case, or other paper, submitted to counsel, the tendency of which might be to detect fraud and breach of confidence.⁴ But these cases, and others of this class, make the equitable jurisdiction rest upon breach of trust, or of confidence, or of duty, or fraudulent conspiracy, which could only be detected by an appeal to defendant's secret knowledge and purpose, and are broadly distinguished from mere general bills of discovery. Where this peculiar kind of discovery fails, the jurisdiction fails, of course; and where the bill is founded upon discovery of deeds, or other writings, the plaintiff is required to annex an affidavit that they are not in his custody, or power,⁵ as evidence of his good faith in seeking equitable relief. It was not unnatural to extend the same course of reasoning, by analogy, to the general subject of discovery, whether in aid of the bill, or of a suit at law. But we think we have sufficiently shown that a broad distinction obtains between the two classes of cases, both in principle and in the English chancery. And some of the American courts have adhered to the English rule.⁶ But where this species of equity jurisdiction once

¹ *Boden v. Dillow*, 1 Atk. 289.

² *Aston v. Lord Exeter*, 6 Vesey, 288, 293; *post*, § 620.

³ *Le Pyre v. Farr*, 2 Vernon, 716. But in *Taylor v. Ferguson*, 4 Har. & J. 46, the court of equity declined to give relief, in a similar case, saying that was the appropriate function of the courts of law.

⁴ *Stanhope v. Roberts*, 2 Atk. 214.

⁵ *Welford*, Eq. Pl. 99. But if the bill is for a general discovery of deeds, no affidavit of loss is required. *Anonymous*, Prec. Ch. 536; *Mad. Ch. Pr.* 200, note (y).

⁶ *Post*, § 74 *e*, p. 76, n. 6. Some of the American cases seem to have apprehended the distinction between that class of cases where the defendant is charged with a wrong and a fraud, in withholding the discovery, and the ordinary case of discovery. *Gregory v. Marks*, 1 Rand. 355; *Borroughs v. McNeill*, 2 Dev. & Batt. Ch. 297. While others seem not to have regarded it. *Emerson v. Staton*, 3 Monr. 116, 118. There are many other American cases where this subject is discussed, but all merely repeat the dictum of *Gelston v. Hoyt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 543; *Allen v. Hopson*, 1 Freeman, Ch. (Miss.) 276.

attaches, it will not be defeated by the production of the paper fraudulently withheld.¹

§ 74 e. The question recurs then, whether the necessity of general discovery, or the obtaining such discovery, will have any appropriate influence upon a court of equity, in determining its jurisdiction. In cases where courts of law and equity exercise concurrent jurisdiction over certain subjects, as in matters of fraud, accident, mistake, and account, there will always be something of discretion to be exercised, as to the particular cases which it will retain. This will depend upon the complication of the facts, the breach of confidence, or trust, the number of interests involved, and many other things, which will be found fully discussed under the appropriate heads. The question of the necessity of discovery, and the fact of obtaining it, may also, with propriety, be taken into the account, in connection with other circumstances, in making this determination. The language of Mr. Ballow, in his *Treatise on Equity*,² already cited,³ is not, perhaps, objectionable. But there are many cases upon this subject, where no discovery will induce the court of equity to pass a final decree, as fraud in the sale of chattels, or a claim of damages for some specific fraud in a part of a transaction, not claiming to have it all set aside.⁴ Vice-Chancellor Wigram expresses the rule clearly.⁵ "I think this part of the plaintiff's case cannot be stated more highly in his favor than this—that the necessity a party may be under (from the very nature of the transaction) to come into a court of equity, for discovery, is a circumstance to be regarded in deciding upon the distinct and independent question of equitable jurisdiction. Farther than this I have not been able to go." This will be found to mark the true limits of equity jurisdiction, as affected by the question of discovery, and is supported by well-considered cases in this country.⁶]

¹ *Hamlin v. Hamlin*, 3 Jones's Eq. 191. See also *Snoddy v. Finch*, 9 Rich. Eq. 355.

² *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (f)*.

³ *Ante*, § 64 k.

⁴ *Bradley v. Bosley*, 1 Barb. Ch. 125, 152, and cases cited.

⁵ *Pearce v. Creswick*, 2 Hare, 286.

⁶ *Middletown Bank v. Russ*, 3 Conn. 135; *Isham v. Gilbert*, id. 166; *Nor. & Wor. Railroad v. Storey*, 17 Conn. 364; *Taylor v. Ferguson*, 4 Har. & Johns. 46. See also *Skinner v. Judson*, 8 Conn. 528; *Avery v. Holland*, 2 Overton, 71; *Laight v. Morgan*, 1 Johns. Cas. 429; s. c. 2 Caines, Cas. in Error, 344. The

CHAPTER IV.

CONCURRENT JURISDICTION OF EQUITY. — ACCIDENT.

[* § 75. Equity jurisdiction, as to law, is concurrent, exclusive, and supplemental.
 § 75, 76. Subject explained as to fraud, accident, and confidence, both as to subject-matter and mode of redress.

§ 78–80. Accident, any unexpected occurrence, without fault, producing serious injury, and no adequate remedy at law.

§ 81, 81 *a*. Relief granted in case of lost instruments.

§ 82. Grounds of equitable interference, to excuse profert of bonds, to give indemnity.

§ 83. If relief prayed, must be affidavit of loss, and offer of indemnity.

§ 84. Illustration of the subject.

§ 85, 86. The remedy in equity, in the case of lost notes and bills.

§ 86 *a*. Limits of jurisdiction further defined.

§ 87. The loss of deeds will be supplied, in support of a long possession.

§ 88. Equitable jurisdiction, in such cases, rests upon the accidental loss, which must be proved, if denied.

§ 89. Equity will relieve against accidental forfeitures.

§ 90. Cases illustrating the rule.

§ 91, 92. Rule applies to executors and legatees, when accidental mistakes have occurred.

§ 93. So also, where a premium is paid for what fails to be performed, or stocks become valueless, by revolution.

§ 94. Equity relieves against a defective execution of a power but not where there is no execution.

§ 95. Purchasers, creditors, a wife, a child, and a charity are so favored; but not the donee of a power, a husband, grandchildren, remote relations, or strangers.

§ 96. Statutory requirements not dispensed with.

§ 97. Nor defects of the essence of the power.

§ 98. Equity will interfere in favor of those who would otherwise be unjustly deprived of the intended benefit of the power.

§ 99. Relief in case of wills.

§ 99 *a*. Boundaries.

§ 99 *b*. Where bills or notes are negotiated, by mistake, without indorsement.

§ 100–104. Cases where equity will not relieve from accident; as in cases of express contract, and no exception named.

§ 105. Also where the accident is the result of the party's own negligence.

§ 105 *a*–108. So, too, where the party's claim is not founded upon valuable consideration; or the relief will defeat a *bonâ fide* purchaser.

§ 109. Definition of accident.]

§ 75. HAVING disposed of these matters, which may in some sort be deemed preliminary, the next inquiry, which will occupy New Jersey court of chancery have, not many years since, declared the English rule upon this subject to be the law of that State. *Brown v. Edsall*, 1 Stock. Ch. 256; *Little v. Cooper*, 2 Stock. 273. We do not despair of finding a like determination in most of the American States, ultimately.]

Our attention, is to ascertain the true boundaries of the jurisdiction at present exercised by courts of equity. The subject here naturally divides itself into three great heads: the concurrent, the exclusive, and the auxiliary or supplemental jurisdiction.¹ As the concurrent jurisdiction is that, which is of the greatest extent, and most familiar occurrence in practice, I propose to begin with it.

§ 76. The concurrent jurisdiction of courts of equity may be truly said to embrace, if not all, at least a very large portion of the original jurisdiction, inherent in the court from its very nature, or first conferred upon it, at the dissolution or partition of the powers of the Great Council, or *Aula Regis*, of the King. We have already seen, that it did not take its rise from the introduction of technical uses or trusts, as has sometimes been erroneously supposed.² Its original foundation, then, may be more fitly referred to what Lord Coke deemed the true one, — fraud, accident, and confidence.³ In many cases of this sort, courts of common law are, and for a long time have been, accustomed to exercise jurisdiction, and to afford an adequate remedy. And in many other cases, in which anciently no such remedy was allowed, their jurisdiction is now expanded, so as effectually to reach them.⁴ Still, however, there are many cases of fraud, accident, and confidence, which either courts of law do not attempt to redress at all; or, if they do, the redress which they afford is inadequate and defective.⁵ The concurrent jurisdiction, then, of equity, has its true origin in one of two sources; either the courts of law, although they have general jurisdiction in the matter, cannot give adequate, specific, and perfect relief; or, under the actual circumstances of the case, they cannot give any relief at all. The former occurs in all cases, when a simple judgment for the plaintiff, or for the defendant, does not meet the full merits and exigencies of the case; but a variety of adjustments, limitations, and cross claims are to be introduced, and finally acted on; and a decree, meeting

¹ In this division I follow Mr. Fonblanque and Mr. Jeremy; and though a more philosophical division might be made, I am by no means certain that it would be more convenient. Mr. Maddock has made a different division; but upon reflection, I have not been inclined to give it a preference. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*); Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. Introd. p. xxvii.

² *Ante*, § 42, 43; 1 Cooper's Public Records, 357.

³ 4 Inst. 84; Earl of Bath v. Sherwin, 10 Mod. 1; 3 Black. Comm. 431.

⁴ 3 Black. Comm. 431, 432.

⁵ See 7 Dane's Abridg. ch. 225, art. 5, § 10; art. 6, § 1; Com. Dig. Chancery, 3, F. 8.

all the circumstances of the particular case between the very parties, is indispensable to complete distributive justice. The latter occurs, when the object sought is incapable of being accomplished by the courts of law; as, for instance, a perpetual injunction, or a preventive process, to restrain trespasses, nuisances, or waste.¹ It may, therefore, be said, that the concurrent jurisdiction of equity extends to all cases of legal rights, where, under the circumstances, there is not a plain, adequate, and complete remedy at law.²

§ 77. The subject, for convenience, may be divided into two branches: (1.), that, in which the subject-matter constitutes the principal (for it rarely constitutes the sole) ground of the jurisdiction; and (2.) that, in which the peculiar remedies afforded by courts of equity constitute the principal (although not always the sole) ground of the jurisdiction. Of these we shall endeavor to treat successively in their order,³ beginning with that of the subject-matter, where the relief is deemed more adequate, complete, and perfect in equity than at common law; but where the remedy is not, or, at least, may not be, of a peculiar and exclusive character. It is proper, however, to add, that as the grounds of jurisdiction often run into each other, any attempt at a scientific method of distribution of the various heads would be impracticable and illusory.

§ 78. And, in the first place, let us consider the cases, where the jurisdiction arises from accident. By the term *accident* is here intended, not merely inevitable casualty, or the act of Providence, or what is technically called *vis major*, or irresistible force; but such unforeseen events, misfortunes, losses, acts, or omissions, as are not the result of any negligence or misconduct in the party.⁴ Lord Cowper, speaking on the subject of accident,

¹ See Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. 292; id. 307; 3 Wooddes. Lect. lvi. p. 397, &c.; Beames, Eq. Pl. ch. 3, p. 77, 78.

² Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 F. 9.

³ See Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 111; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (f), p. 12.

⁴ Grounds and Rudim. of the Law, M. 120, p. 81 (edit. 1781). See Jeremy on Equity Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, Introd. p. 538. Mr. Jeremy defines accident, in the sense used in a court of equity, to be "an occurrence in relation to a contract which was not anticipated by the parties when the same was entered into, and which gives an undue advantage to one of them over the other in a court of law." Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, p. 358. Accidents, in the sense of a court of equity, may arise in relation to other things besides contracts, and therefore the confining of the definition to contracts is not entirely accurate. The definition is defective in another respect; for it does not exclude cases of

as cognizable in equity, said: "By accident is meant when a case is distinguished from others of the like nature by unusual circumstances;"¹ a definition quite too loose and inaccurate, without some further qualifications; for it is entirely consistent with the language, that the unusual circumstances may have resulted from the party's own gross negligence, folly, or rashness.

§ 79. The jurisdiction of the court, arising from accident, in the general sense, already suggested, is a very old head in equity, and probably coeval with its existence.² But it is not every case of accident, which will justify the interposition of a court of equity.³ The jurisdiction, being concurrent, will be maintained only, first, when a court of law cannot grant suitable relief; and, secondly, when the party has a conscientious title to relief. Both grounds must concur in the given case; for otherwise a court of equity not only may, but is bound to withhold its aid. Mr. Justice Blackstone has very correctly observed, that, "many accidents are supplied in a court of law; as loss of deeds, mistakes in receipts and accounts, wrong payments, deaths, which made it impossible to perform a condition literally, and a multitude of other contingencies. And many cannot be redressed, even in a court of equity; as, if by accident a recovery is ill suffered, a devise ill executed, a contingent remainder destroyed, or a power of leasing omitted in a family settlement."⁴

§ 80. The first consideration then is, whether there is an adequate remedy at law, not merely, whether there is some remedy

unanticipated occurrences, resulting from the negligence or misconduct of the party seeking relief.

¹ Earl of Bath *v.* Sherwin, 10 Mod. 1, 3; Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 D. 10.

² See *East India Company v. Boddam*, 9 Ves. 466; *Armitage v. Wadsworth*, 1 Madd. 189 to 193.

³ *Whitfield v. Faussat*, 1 Ves. 392, 393.

⁴ 3 Black. Comm. 431; Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 F. 8. Even this language is true in a general sense only; for (as we shall presently see) omissions in a family settlement, and many other defects in private and legal proceedings, may be redressed, or rather supplied, in equity. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7; *Mitford, Eq. Pl.* 127, 128 (4th edit.), by Jeremy. In *Whitfield v. Faussat* (1 Ves. 392), Lord Hardwicke is reported to have said: "The loss of a deed is not always a ground to come into courts of equity for relief; for, if there was no more in the case, although he (the plaintiff) is entitled to have a discovery of that, whether lost or not, courts of law [sometimes] admit evidence of the loss of a deed, proving the existence of it, and the contents, just as a court of equity does." The other parts of his lordship's opinion show, that the word "sometimes" should be inserted, as a qualification of the language.

at law.¹ And here a most material distinction is to be attended to. In modern times, courts of law frequently interfere, and grant a remedy under circumstances in which it would certainly have been denied in earlier periods. And, sometimes, the legislature, by express enactments, has conferred on courts of law the same remedial faculty which belongs to courts of equity. Now (as we have seen), in neither case, if the courts of equity originally obtained and exercised jurisdiction, is that jurisdiction overturned or impaired by this change of the authority at law in regard to legislative enactments; for, unless there are prohibitory or restrictive words used, the uniform interpretation is, that they confer concurrent and not exclusive remedial authority.² And it would be still more difficult to maintain, that a court of law, by its own act, could oust or repeal a jurisdiction already rightfully attached in equity.³

§ 81. One of the most common interpositions of equity under this head is, in the case of lost bonds, or other instruments under seal.⁴ Until a very recent period, the doctrine prevailed that there could be no remedy on a lost bond, in a court of common law, because there could be no *profert* of the instrument, without which the declaration would be fatally defective.⁵ At present, however, the courts of law do entertain the jurisdiction, and dispense with the *profert*, if an allegation of loss, by time and accident, is stated in

¹ Cooper, Eq. Pl. 129.

² Case *v.* Fishback, 10 B. Monroe, 40.

³ Mitf. Eq. Pl. 113, 114; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*), p. 15, 16, 17; Atkinson *v.* Leonard, 3 Bro. Ch. 218; *Ex parte* Greenway, 6 Ves. 812; Bromley *v.* Holland, 7 Ves. 19, 20; East India Company *v.* Boddam, 9 Ves. 466; Walmsley *v.* Child, 1 Ves. 341; Kemp *v.* Pryor, 7 Ves. 248 to 250; Cooper, Eq. Pl. ch. 3, p. 129; Ludlow *v.* Simond, 2 Caines, Cas. in Err. 1; King *v.* Baldwin, 17 Johns. 384; Post *v.* Kimberly, 9 Johns. 470; Mayne *v.* Griswold, 3 Sandf. s. c. 463.

⁴ Mr. Reeves (Hist. of English Law, Vol. 3, p. 189) has remarked, that by the old common law, "when a person was to found a claim by virtue of a deed, which was detained in the hands of another, so that he was prevented from making a *profert* of it, he was utterly deprived of the means of obtaining justice according to the forms of law. If a deed of grant of rent, common, or annuity were lost, as these claims could only be substantiated by the evidence of a deed, they vanished together with it."

⁵ Whitfield *v.* Faussat, 1 Ves. 392, 393; Co. Lit. 35 (*b*); Rex *v.* Arundel, Hob. 109; Atkinson *v.* Leonard, 3 Bro. Ch. 218; *Ex parte* Greenway, 5 Ves. 812; Bromley *v.* Holland, 7 Ves. 19, 20; East India Company *v.* Boddam, 9 Ves. 466; Toulman *v.* Price, 5 Ves. 238.

the declaration.¹ But this circumstance is not permitted in the slightest degree to change the course in equity.²

[* § 81 a. In a recent case in New Hampshire it was held that where a mortgage upon land to secure personal support had been accidentally lost, a court of equity will decree the execution of a new mortgage.]³

§ 82. Independent of this general ground of the inability to make a proper profert of the deed at law, there is another satisfactory ground for the interference of a court of equity. It is, that no other court can furnish the same remedy with all the fit limitations which may be demanded for the purposes of justice, by granting *relief* only upon the terms of the party's giving (when proper) a suitable bond of indemnity. Now, a court of law is incompetent to require such a bond of indemnity as a part of its judgments, although it has sometimes attempted an analogous relief (it is difficult to understand upon what ground), by requiring the previous offer of such an indemnity.⁴ But such an offer may, in many cases, fall far short of the just relief; for, in the intermediate time, there may be a great change of the circumstances of the parties to the bond of indemnity.⁵ In joint bonds, there are still stronger reasons; for the equities may be different between the different defendants.⁶ And, besides, a court of equity, before it will grant *relief* (it is otherwise where *discovery* only is sought), will insist, that the defendant shall have the protection of the oath and affidavit of the plaintiff to the fact of the loss; thus requiring, what is most essential to the interests of justice, that the party should pledge his conscience by his oath, that the instrument is lost.⁷

¹ Read v. Brokman, 3 T. R. 151; Totty v. Nesbitt, 3 T. R. 153, note.

² Ibid.; Walmsley v. Child, 1 Ves. 341; Kemp v. Pryor, 7 Ves. 249, 250; Cooper, Eq. Pl. 129, 130; Evans v. Bicknell, 6 Ves. 182; Mayne v. Griswold, 3 Sandf. s. c. 478.

³ [* Lawrence v. Lawrence, 42 N. H. 109.]

⁴ Ex parte Greenway, 6 Ves. 812; Pierson v. Hutchinson, 2 Camp. 211; a. c. 6 Esp. 126; Fales v. Russell, 16 Pick. 315; Almy v. Reed, 10 Cush. 421; Smith v. Rockwell, 2 Hill (N. Y.), 482; Hansard v. Robinson, 7 B. & Cressw. 90. [* It is familiar practice, in the courts of law, after final judgment upon a lost note or bill, or any collateral remedy, where there is reason to apprehend the defendant is exposed to a double payment of the sum included in the judgment, or any portion of it, to order a stay of execution, until the collateral contract shall be deposited with the clerk of the court, or a sufficient bond of indemnity given.]

⁵ East India Company v. Boddam, 9 Ves. 466; Ex parte Greenway, 6 Ves. 812.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Bromley v. Holland, 7 Ves. 19, 20; Ex parte Greenway, 6 Ves. 812; 1

§ 83. We have seen, that, in cases of the loss of sealed instruments, equity will entertain a suit for relief, as well as for discovery, upon the party's making an affidavit of the loss of the instrument, and offering indemnity. The original ground of granting the relief was the supposed inadequacy of a court of law to afford it in a suitable manner, from the impossibility of making a profert.¹ But, where discovery only, and not relief, is the object of the bill, there, equity will grant the discovery without any affidavit of loss, or offer of indemnity; and, in a variety of cases, this is all that the plaintiff may desire.² The ground of this distinction is, that, when relief is prayed, the proper forum of jurisdiction is sought to be changed from law to equity; and in all such cases an affidavit ought to be required to prevent abuse of the process of the court. But when discovery only is sought, the original jurisdiction remains at law, and equity is merely auxiliary. The jurisdiction for discovery alone would, therefore, seem upon principle to be universal. But the jurisdiction for relief is special, and limited to peculiar cases; and in all these cases there must be an affidavit of the loss, and, when proper, an offer of indemnity also in the bill.³

Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*), p. 16, 17; *Whitchurch v. Golding*, 2 P. Will. 541; *Anon.*, 3 Atk. 17; *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 29, 54, 123, 124; *Walmsley v. Child*, 1 Ves. 344, 345; *Cooper, Eq. Pl. ch. 3*, p. 126, 129, 130; *id.* *Introd.* p. xxviii, xxix; *Leroy v. Veeder*, 1 Johns. Cas. 417.

¹ *Ibid.*; *Anon.* 2 Atk. 61; *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 113, 114.

² *Dormer v. Fortescue*, 3 Atk. 132; *Whitchurch v. Golding*, 2 P. Will. 541; *Walmsley v. Child*, 1 Ves. 344, 345.

³ In *Walmsley v. Child* (1 Ves. 344), Lord Hardwicke is reported to have said, that there are but three cases in which a bill for discovery and relief on lost instruments can be maintained in equity. The passage, however, is singularly obscure, and of difficult interpretation; and I have not been able entirely to satisfy my mind what Lord Hardwicke's real doctrine was, or what were the three cases to which he alluded. Two of them are easily made out; but the perplexity is in ascertaining the third, as contradistinguished from the other two. The passage is as follows: "But there are cases, upon which you may come into equity on a loss, though remedy may be at law; and one is clear upon a bill for discovery. But if you come into equity, not only for discovery, but to have relief, on the foundation of loss, that changes the jurisdiction. And there are but three cases in which you are entitled to that; in every one of which you are obliged to annex an affidavit to the bill, to prove the loss. If the deed or instrument, upon which the demand arises, is lost, and you only come for discovery, you are entitled thereto, without affidavit; but if relief is prayed beyond that discovery, to have payment of the debt, affidavit of the loss must be annexed; for that changes the jurisdiction. If the deed lost concerned the title of lands,

§ 84. It has been remarked by Lord Hardwicke, that the loss of a deed is not always a ground to come into a court of equity for relief; for, if there is no more in the case, although the party may be entitled to a discovery of the original existence and validity of the deed, courts of law may afford just relief, since they will admit evidence of the loss and contents of a deed, just as a court of equity will do.¹ To enable the party, therefore, in case of a lost deed, to come into equity for relief, he must establish, that there is no remedy at all at law, or no remedy which is adequate, and adapted to the circumstances of the case. In the first place, he may come into equity for payment of a lost bond; for in such a case his bill need not be for a discovery only, but may also be for relief; since the jurisdiction attached, when there was no remedy and possession prayed to be established, such affidavit must be annexed. Another case is of a personal demand, where loss of a bond, a bill in equity on that loss, to be paid the demand; there, a bill for discovery will not be sufficient, but it must be to be paid the money thereon; but an affidavit must be annexed. The reason of the difference between a bond and a note is, that in an action at law, a *profert in Curiam* of the bond must itself be made; otherwise *oyer* cannot be demanded by the defendant; and if *oyer* is not given, the plaintiff cannot proceed. But that is not necessary in the case of notes; no *oyer* is demanded upon them, and proving the contents being sufficient; and nothing standing in the plaintiff's way. Another case, in which you may come into this court on a loss is, to pray satisfaction and payment of it upon terms of given security. In an action at law, the plaintiff might offer, but the defendant could not be compelled to take; but in equity, that would be consideration, whether they were reasonable. That was the case of *Teresy v. Gorey*, as Lord Nottingham has taken the name in an authentic record I have of it; which was Easter, 28 C. 2, where a bill of exchange was drawn on the defendant, and indorsed, in the third place, to the plaintiff, by whom the bill was either lost or mislaid, as appeared by the affidavit annexed. And the bill prayed, that the defendant might be decreed to pay the plaintiff the money, as last indorsee, according to the acceptance, the plaintiff first giving security to save the defendant harmless against all former assignments; which was so decreed, but without damages and costs. In a book called *Finch's Reports*, 301, the decree is somewhat larger, and the acceptance of the defendant was after the third indorsement, and it is in that book, though not so in the manuscript report. And, indeed, I do take it to be as in the book; and then there is no doubt of the plaintiff's right; but if that be material, it shall be inquired into. In that case, if the plaintiff could, at law, prove the contents of his bill, and the indorsement and the loss of it, he might have brought his action at law, upon that bill, without coming into this court. But he was apprehensive the course of trade might stand in his way at law, and therefore came into this court upon terms, submitting it to the judgment of the court, whether they were not reasonable."

¹ *Whitfield v. Fausat*, 1 Ves. 392, 393; *ante*, § 79, note (1).

at law for want of a due profert.¹ In the next place, he may come into equity when a deed of land has been destroyed, or is concealed by the defendant; for then, as the party cannot know which alternative is correct, a court of equity will make a decree (which a court of law cannot), that the plaintiff should hold and enjoy the land, until the defendant shall produce the deed, or admit its destruction.² So, if a deed concerning land is lost, and the party in possession prays discovery, and to be established in his possession under it, equity will relieve; for no remedy, in such a case, lies at law.³ And, where the plaintiff is out of possession, there are cases in which equity will interfere upon lost or suppressed title-deeds, and decree possession to the plaintiff; but in all such cases there must be other equities calling for the action of the court.⁴ Indeed, the bill must always lay some ground besides the mere loss of a title-deed, or other sealed instrument, to justify a prayer for relief; as, that the loss obstructs the right of the plaintiff at law, or leaves him exposed to undue perils in the future assertion of such right.⁵

§ 85. Although, upon a lost bond, equity will decree payment for the reason already stated: yet it has been said, that it will not entertain jurisdiction for relief upon a lost negotiable note, or other unsealed security, so as to decree payment upon the mere fact of loss; for no such supposed inability to recover at law exists in the case of such a note or unsealed contract, which is lost, as exists for want of a profert of a bond at law. No profert is necessary, and no *oyer* allowed at law of such a note or security;⁶ and a recovery can be had at law, upon mere proof of the loss.⁷ But,

¹ *Ibid.*; *Walmsley v. Child*, 1 Ves. 344, 345; *post*, § 88.

² *Rex v. Arundel*, Hob. 108 *b*; 1 Ves. 392.

³ *Walmsley v. Child*, 1 Ves. 434, 435. See also *Dalton v. Coatsworth*, 1 P. Will. 731; *Dormer v. Fortescue*, 3 Atk. 132.

⁴ *Dormer v. Fortescue*, 3 Atk. 132.

⁵ See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*); *id.* ch. 3, § 3. See *Mitf. Eq. Pl.* by Jeremy, 113, 114.

⁶ *Walmsley v. Child*, 1 Ves. 345; *Glynn v. Bank of England*, 2 Ves. 38, 41.

⁷ *Ibid.* In *Hansard v. Robinson* (7 B. & Cressw. 90), it was expressly decided that no action would lie by the indorsee of a bill of exchange against the acceptor, where the bill was lost and not produced at the trial, although the loss was established to have been after it became due. The ground of the decision was, that by the custom of merchants the acceptor was entitled to the possession of the bill as his voucher for the payment; and the extreme inconvenience of re-

then, a court of law cannot, as we have seen, insist upon an indemnity, or at least cannot insist upon it in such a form as may operate as a perfect indemnity.¹ In such a case, therefore, a court of equity will entertain a bill for relief and payment, upon an offer in the bill to give a proper indemnity under the direction of the court, and not without. And such an offer entitles the court to require an indemnity, not strictly attainable at law, and founds a just jurisdiction.²

§ 86. In the cases which we have been considering, the lost note, or other security, was negotiable. And, according to the authorities, this circumstance is most material; for otherwise it would seem, that no indemnity would be necessary,³ and consequently no relief could be had in equity. The propriety of this exception has been somewhat doubted; for the party is entitled, upon payment of such a note or security, to have it delivered up to him, as voucher of the payment and extinguishment of it; and it may have been assigned, in equity, to a third person.⁴ And although, in such a case, the assignee would be affected by all the equities between the original parties, yet the promisor may not always, after a great length of time, be able to establish those equities by competent proof; and, at all events, he may be put to serious expense and trouble, to establish his exoneration from the charge. The jurisdiction of courts of equity, under such circumstances, seems perfectly within the principles on which such courts ordinarily proceed to grant relief, not only in cases of absolute loss, but of impending or probable mischief or inconvenience. And a bond of indemnity, under such circumstances, is but a

quiring the acceptor to prove the loss, if he should be required so to do, in a suit by another person as holder. The court said the proper remedy was in equity, where an offer of indemnity might be made and enforced. See *Thayer v. King*, 15 Ohio, 242; *Lazell v. Lazell*, 12 Verm. 443.

¹ *Ante*, § 82; 2 Camp. 211; 7 B. & Cressw. 90.

² *Walmsley v. Child*, 1 Ves. 344, 345; *Tersey v. Gorey*, Finch, 301; s. c. 1 Ves. 345; *Glynn v. Bank of England*, 1 Ves. 446; 2 Ves. 38; *Mossop v. Eadon*, 16 Ves. 430, 434; *Chitty on Bills* (8th edit. 1833), p. 290; *Bromley v. Holland*, 7 Ves. 19 to 21; *Davies v. Dodd*, 4 Price, 176; s. c. 1 Wils. Exch. 110.

³ *Mossop v. Eadon*, 16 Ves. 430, 434. See *Chitty on Bills* (8th edit. 1833), p. 291, note; *Hough v. Barton*, 20 Verm. 455. [**Macartney v. Graham*, 2 Sim. 285.]

⁴ *Hansard v. Robinson*, 7 Barn. & Cressw. 90; *Story on Promissory Notes*, § 106 to 116, § 243 to 245, § 445.

just security to the promisor against the vexation and accumulated expenses of a suit.¹

[* § 86 *a*. A court of equity will grant relief in the case of a lost note, negotiable, but not negotiated, and lost when overdue. The propriety of a resort to a court of equity, in such cases, rests upon the right of the promisor, in all cases of written securities for money, to have the security surrendered, on payment, and that he is otherwise not expected to make payment; and the necessity of discovery, in equity, by reason, of the accident of the loss of the paper. In such cases it is proper to annex to the bill an affidavit of the loss, and to submit to give such indemnity as the court shall deem meet. But these are not of the essence of the jurisdiction in equity, and may be supplied by amendment, or upon the motion of the defendant, and the plaintiff still have a decree. But where the claim, at the time of the final decree, is barred by the statute of limitations, there is no indemnity required, and relief will be granted, although none were offered in the bill before the claim was barred.² There is no absolute necessity of resort to a court of equity, as the law now stands, except in the case of negotiable instruments, negotiated while current, courts of law now allowing a recovery at law, upon lost instruments in all other cases. And it is only in this class of cases that the offer of an indemnity seems, in practice, always to be made.³ If the plaintiff be the party solely in fault, in cases of this character, he will be compelled to pay defendant's costs of the suit, as between attorney and client. But the defendant should bring the money into court, at the earliest opportunity, and offer it for the acceptance of the plaintiff, upon giving such indemnity as the court shall deem reasonable. And when that was not done, and the plaintiff's account of the manner of the loss of the instrument was suspicious, relief was granted, without costs to either party.⁴]

§ 87. It is upon grounds somewhat similar, that courts of equity often interfere, where the party, from the long possession or exercise of a right over property, may fairly be presumed to have had a legal title to it, and yet has lost the legal evidence of it, or is

¹ See *Hansard v. Robinson*, 7 B. & Cressw. 90; *East India Company v. Boddam*, 9 Ves. 468, 469; *Davies v. Dodd*, 4 Price, 176.

² [**Hopkins v. Adams*, 20 Vt. 407, and cases cited.

³ *Hopkins v. Adams*, 20 Vt. 407, and cases cited.

⁴ *Ibid.*]

now unable to produce it. Under such circumstances, equity acts upon the presumption, arising from such possession, as equivalent to complete proof of the legal right. Thus, where a rent has been received and paid for a long time, equity will enforce the payment, although no deed can be produced to sustain the claim; or the precise lands, out of which it is payable, cannot, from confusion of boundaries, or other accident, be now ascertained.¹

§ 88. In the cases of supposed lost instruments, where relief is sought, it has been seen, that, as a guard upon the preliminary exercise of jurisdiction, an affidavit of the loss of the instrument, and that it is not in the possession or power of the plaintiff, is indispensable to sustain the bill.² And, in order to maintain the suit, it is further indispensable, that the loss, if not admitted by the answer of the defendant, should, at the hearing of the cause, be established by competent and satisfactory proofs.³ For the very foundation of the suit in equity rests upon this most material fact. If, therefore, the plaintiff should fail, at the hearing, to establish the loss of the instrument,⁴ or the defendant should overcome the plaintiff's proofs by countervailing testimony of its existence, the suit will be dismissed, and the plaintiff remitted to the legal forum.⁵ [As where the bond has been destroyed or suppressed by the obligee.]⁶ But if the loss is sufficiently established, when it is denied by the defendant's answer, the plaintiff will be entitled to relief, although he may have other evidence, competent and sufficient to establish the existence and contents of the instru-

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3, and note (g); *Steward v. Bridger*, 2 Vern. 516; *Collett v. Jaques*, 1 Ch. Cas. 120; *Cox v. Foley*, 1 Vern. 359; *Eton College v. Beauchamp*, 1 Ch. Cas. 121; *Holder v. Chambury*, 3 P. Will. 256; *Duke of Leeds v. Powell*, 1 Ves. 171; *Duke of Bridgewater v. Edwards*, 4 Bro. Parl. C. 139; *Duke of Leeds v. New Radnor*, 2 Bro. Ch. C. 338, 518; *Benson v. Baldwin*, 1 Atk. 598; *Cooper*, Eq. Pl. 130.

² *East India Co. v. Boddam*, 9 Ves. 466; *Cooper*, Eq. Pl. 125, 126.

³ *Stokoe v. Robson*, 3 Ves. & B. 50; *Smith v. Bicknell*, id. note; *Cookes v. Hellier*, 1 Ves. 234, 235; *Walmsley v. Child*, 1 Ves. 344, 345; *Cooper*, Eq. Pl. 239; *Clavering v. Clavering*, 2 Ves. 232; *East India Company v. Boddam*, 9 Ves. 466.

⁴ As to proof of loss, see *Green v. Bailey*, 15 Sim. 542.

⁵ See *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* 359, 360, 361; *Cooper*, Eq. Pl. 238, 239; *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 222; *Armitage v. Wadsworth*, 1 Mad. 192 to 194; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3, note (h).

⁶ *Davies v. Davies*, 6 Iredell, Eq. 418.

ment, of which he might have availed himself in a court of law. For if the jurisdiction once attaches by the loss of the instrument, a court of equity will not drive the party to the hazard of a trial at law, when the case is fit for its own interposition, and find action upon a claim to sift the conscience of the party by a discovery.

§ 89. We have thus far been considering cases of accident, founded upon lost instruments. But there are many other cases of accident, where courts of equity will grant both discovery and relief. One of the earliest cases in which they were accustomed to interfere, was, where by accident a bond had not been paid at the appointed day, and it was subsequently sued; or where a part on had been paid at the day.² This jurisdiction was afterwards greatly enlarged in its operation, and applied to all cases, where relief is sought against the penalty of a bond, upon the ground that it is unjust for the party to avail himself of the penalty, when an offer of full indemnity is tendered. The same principle governs in the case of mortgages, where courts of equity constantly allow a redemption, although there is a forfeiture at law.³ And it may be

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*), p. 17. But see *ante*, § 84, p. 6 and note (3).

² Cary's Rep. 1, 2; 7 Ves. 273. See also Harg. Law Tracts, p. 431, 43 Norburie on Chancery Abuses.

³ Seton v. Slade, 7 Ves. 273, 274; 2 White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas. 37 Lennon v. Napper, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 684, 685; Com. Dig. Chancery, 1 A. 5; Mitf. Ch. Pl. by Jeremy, 117, 130; Cooper, Eq. Pl. 130, 131; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, c 3, § 4, and notes. Lord Redesdale puts the relief in cases of this sort upon the ground of accident. His language is: "In many cases of accidents, as lapse of time, the courts of equity will also relieve against the consequences of the accident in a court of law. Upon this ground they proceed in the common case of mortgage, where the title of the mortgagee has become absolute at law, upon default of payment of the mortgage money at the time stipulated for payment Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 130. I apprehend, that this is not the true ground, but that it turns upon the construction of the contract, being a mere security, and time not being of the essence of the contract; and the unconscionableness of insisting upon taking the land for the money. Seton v. Slade, 7 Ves. 273, 274; Lennon v. Napper, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 684, 685; *post*, § 1313, 1314, 1315 [*And where, as in the American practice, decrees of foreclosure became absolute by mere lapse of time, without the confirmatory order of the court; and the mortgagor, intending to pay the money, is prevented, by accident or mistake, or by sickness, the court of chancery will relieve against the accident and extend the time of foreclosure. Doty v. Whittlesey, 1 Root, 310; Crane v. Hancks, 1 Root, 468.]

be stated generally, that, where an inequitable loss or injury will otherwise fall upon a party from circumstances beyond his own control, or from his own acts done in entire good faith, and in the performance of a supposed duty, without negligence, courts of equity will interfere to grant him relief.

§ 90. Cases, illustrative of this doctrine, may easily be put. In the course of the administration of estates, executors and administrators often pay debts and legacies upon the entire confidence that the assets are sufficient for all purposes. It may turn out, from unexpected occurrences, or from debts and claims, made known at a subsequent time, that there is a deficiency of assets. Under such circumstances, they may be entitled to no relief at law. But in a court of equity, if they have acted with good faith, and with due caution, they will be clearly entitled to it, upon the ground, that, otherwise, they will be innocently subject to an unjust loss, from what the law itself deems an accident.¹ Indeed, it has been said, that in England no case at law has yet decided, that an executor or administrator, once become fully responsible, by an actual receipt of a part of his testator's property, for the administration thereof, can found his discharge in respect thereof, as against a creditor seeking satisfaction out of the testator's assets, either on the score of inevitable accident, or destruction by fire, or loss by robbery or the like, or of reasonable confidence disappointed, or of loss by any of the other various means, which afford an excuse to ordinary agents and bailees in cases of loss without any negligence on their part; and that courts of law are disinclined to make such a precedent.² If this be a true descrip-

¹ *Edwards v. Freeman*, 2 P. Will. 447; *Johnson v. Johnson*, 3 Bos. & Pull. 162, 169; *Hawkins v. Day, Ambler*, 160; *Chamberlain v. Chamberlain*, 2 Freem. 141. But see *Coppin v. Coppin*, 2 P. Will. 296, 297; *Orr v. Kaines*, 2 Ves. 194; *Underwood v. Hatton*, 5 Beavan, 36.

² *Crosse v. Smith*, 7 East, 246; *Johnson v. Johnson*, 3 Bos. & Pull. 162, 169. But see *Orr v. Kaines*, 2 Ves. 194; *Hawkins v. Day, Ambler*, 160. But, even at law, the payment of a simple contract debt, without notice of a specialty debt, would, in case of a deficiency of assets, protect the executor or administrator. *Davis v. Monkhouse, Fitzgib.* 76; *Brooking v. Jennings*, 1 Mod. 174; *Britton v. Bathurst*, 3 Lev. 115; *Hawkins v. Day, Ambler*, 160, 162. In *Brisbane v. Dacres* (5 Taunt. 143, 159), Mr. Justice Chambre seems to have thought, that an administrator, paying money *per capita*, in misapplication of the effects of the intestate, might recover it back at law. But Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, in the same case, doubted it; and said if he could, it would be only under the principle of *æquum et bonum*.

tion of the actual state of the law on this subject, it would become an intolerable grievance, if courts of equity should not be able, under any circumstances, to interfere in favor of executors and administrators, in order to prevent such gross injustice. And, in cases of this sort, relief has accordingly been often granted by courts of equity, in mitigation and melioration of the hardship of the common law.¹ But, to found a good title to such relief, it seems indispensable, that there should have been no negligence or misconduct on the part of such executors or administrators in the payment of the assets; for if there has been any negligence or misconduct, that, perhaps, may induce a court of equity to withhold its assistance.²

§ 91. Other cases may be easily put, in which an executor or administrator would be entitled to relief in equity. Thus, if he should receive money, supposed to be due from a debtor to the estate; and it should turn out that the debt had been previously paid; and, before the discovery, he had paid away the money to creditors of the estate; in such a case the supposed debtor may recover back the money in equity from the executor; and the latter may, in the same manner, recover it back from the creditors, to whom he paid it.³ In like manner, if an executor should recover a judgment, and receive the amount, and apply it in discharge of debts, and then the judgment should be reversed, he is compellable to refund the money, and may recover it back from the creditors.⁴

§ 92. Upon analogous grounds a court of equity will interpose in favor of an unpaid legatee, to compel the other legatees, who have been paid their full legacies, to refund in proportion, if there was an original deficiency of assets to pay all the legacies, and the

¹ *Croft's Executors v. Lyndsey*, 2 Freem. 1; s. c. 2 Eq. Abridg. 452; *Holt v. Holt*, 1 Ch. Cas. 190; 2 P. Will. 447; *Orr v. Kaines*, 2 Ves. 194; *Moore v. Moore*, 2 Ves. 600; *Nelthorp v. Hill*, 1 Ch. Cas. 135; *Noel v. Robinson*, 1 Vern. 90, 94; 2 Eq. Abridg. Ex'rs, K. p. 452. See *Riddle v. Mandeville*, 5 Cranch, 330.

² See *Hovenden's* note to 2 Freem. 1 (n. 3); 1 Ch. Cas. 136; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3. [* We apprehend there is no ground whatever, at the present day, to suppose that an executor or administrator would be held to any different rule of responsibility in regard to assets, in a court of law, from that which prevails in courts of equity. as stated in this section.]

³ *Pooley v. Ray*, 1 P. Will. 355; 2 Eq. Abridg. Ex'rs, 452, pl. 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*

executor is insolvent; but not, as it should seem, if there was no such original deficiency, and there has been a waste by the executor.¹ The reason of the distinction seems to be, that the other legatees in the first case have received more than their just proportion of the assets; but in the last case no more than their just proportion. And, therefore, there is nothing inequitable on their part in availing themselves of their superior diligence.² But legatees are always compellable to refund in favor of creditors; because the latter have a priority of right to satisfaction out of the assets.³

§ 93. Other illustrations of the doctrine of relief in equity, upon the ground of accident, may be stated. Suppose a minor is bound as apprentice to a person, subject to the bankrupt laws, and a large premium is given for the apprenticeship to the master, and he becomes bankrupt during the apprenticeship; in such a case, equity will interfere, and apportion the premium, upon the ground

¹ *Orr v. Kaines*, 2 Ves. 194; *Moore v. Moore*, 2 Ves. 600; *Anon.*, 1 P. Will. 495; *Walcot v. Hall*, *id.* Cox's note; s. c. 1 Bro. Ch. 305, and Belt's notes; *Noel v. Robinson*, 1 Vern. 94, Raithby's note (1); *Edwards v. Freeman*, 2 P. Will. 447.

² *Id.* 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 2, § 5, note (p); *Lupton v. Lupton*, 2 Johns. Ch. 614, 626. But it seems, that the executor himself cannot in a case of deficiency of assets, compel the legatees to refund in favor of another legatee, who is unpaid, where the executor has made a voluntary payment; but only where the payment has been compulsive. 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 2, § 5, note (p); *Hodges v. Waddington*, 2 Vent. 360; *Newman v. Barton*, 2 Vern. 205; *Orr v. Kaines*, 2 Ves. 194. And in cases of creditors he cannot compel legatees to refund, if he knew of the debts at the time of the payment but only when the debts were then unknown to him. *Nelthorp v. Hill*, 1 Ch. Cas. 136; *Jewon v. Grant*, 3 Swanst. 659; *Hodges v. Waddington*, 2 Vent. 360; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 2, § 5, note (p). So that the rights of the executor himself, and those of legatees and creditors, are not precisely the same in all cases of a deficiency of assets. See 2 Eq. Abridg. Legacies, B. 13, p. 554; 17 Mass. 384, 385. In Massachusetts, an executor, who has voluntarily paid a legatee, can, on the subsequent discovery of a deficiency of assets, recover back the money at law. And so, if he has paid some creditors in full, and there is afterwards a deficiency of assets, he may recover back from the creditors so paid, in proportion to the deficiency. *Walker v. Hill*, 17 Mass. 380; *Walker v. Bradlee*, 3 Pick. 261. See *Riddle v. Mandeville*, 5 Cranch, 329, 330.

³ *Noel v. Robinson*, 1 Vern. 90, 94; *id.* 460; *Newman v. Barton*, 2 Vern. 205; *Nelthorp v. Hill*, 1 Ch. Cas. 136; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 2, § 5, note (p); *Lupton v. Lupton*, 2 Johns. Ch. 614, 626; *Anon.*, 1 Vern. 162; *Hardwick v. Mynd*, 1 Anst. 112.

of the failure of the contract from accident.¹ So, if stock of a government is held for the benefit of A. during life, and afterwards the growing payments, as well as the arrears, are to be for the benefit of B.; and then a revolution should occur, by which the payments should be suspended for several years; and A. should die, before the arrears are paid; there, such revolution would be treated as an accident; and the representatives of A. would be entitled to the arrears, and not B., notwithstanding the language of the contract. For the arrears, supposed in the contract, could mean only such as might ordinarily occur, and not such as should arise from extraordinary events.² So, if an annuity is directed by a will to be secured by public stock, and an investment is made accordingly, sufficient at the time for the purpose; but afterwards the stock is reduced by an act of parliament, so that the stock becomes insufficient; equity will decree the deficiency to be made up against the residuary legatees, as an accident.³

§ 94. In the execution of mere powers, it has been said that a court of equity will interpose, and grant relief on account of accident, as well as of mistake. And this seems regularly true, where, by accident, there is a defective execution of the power. But where there is a non-execution of the power by accident, there seems more reason to question the doctrine. It is true, that it was said by two judges in a celebrated case, that, if the party appear to have intended to execute his power, and is prevented by death, equity will interpose to effectuate his intent; for it is an impediment by the act of God.⁴ But it is doubtful whether this doctrine can be maintained, unless the party has taken some preparatory steps for the execution; so that it may be deemed a case, not of non-execution, but of defective execution.⁵ And it has been said, that equity will also relieve in cases of a defective execution of a power, where it is rendered impossible, by circumstances

¹ *Hale v. Webb*, 2 Bro. Ch. 78, and *Belt's* note. See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 8, note (g); *Ex parte Sandby*, 1 Atk. 149; *post*, § 472.

² *Hatchett v. Pattle*, 6 Madd. 4.

³ *Davies v. Wattier*, 1 Sim. and Stu. 463; *May v. Bennet*, 1 Russell, 370.

⁴ *Earl of Bath and Montague's case*, 3 Ch. Cas. 69, 93; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, note (k); *id.* B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, note (v); *Sugden on Powers*, ch. 6, § 2, p. 378 (3d edit.).

⁵ See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, note (k), note (k); *Smith v. Ashton*, 1 Ch. Cas. 264; 2 *Chance on Powers*, ch. 23, § 3, art. 2999 to 3004; *id.* § 1, art. 2817 to 2923; *Sugden on Powers*, ch. 6, § 2, p. 378 (3d edit.).

over which the party has no control, for him to execute it; as if he is sent abroad by the government, and the prescribed witnesses cannot be obtained; or if the remainder-man refuses to the party a sight of the deeds creating the power, so that the party cannot ascertain the proper form of executing it.¹

§ 95. In regard to the defective execution of powers, resulting either from accident or mistake, or both, and also in regard to agreements to execute powers (which may generally be deemed a species of defective execution),² courts of equity do not in all cases interfere and grant relief; but grant it only in favor of persons, in a moral sense entitled to the same, and viewed with peculiar favor, and where there are no opposing equities on the other side.³ Without undertaking to enumerate all the qualifications of doctrine, belonging to this intricate subject, it may be stated, that courts of equity, in cases of defective execution of powers, will (unless there be some countervailing equity) interpose, and grant relief in favor of purchaser,⁴ creditors,⁵ a wife, a child, and a charity; but not in favor of the donee of the power, or a husband, or grandchildren,⁶ or remote relations, or strangers generally.⁷

§ 96. But in cases of defective execution of powers, we are carefully to distinguish between powers which are created by private parties, and those which are specially created by statute; as, for instance, powers of tenants in tail to make leases. The latter are construed with more strictness, and, whatever formalities are required by the statute, must be punctually complied with, otherwise the defect cannot be helped, or, at least, may not, perhaps, be helped in equity; for courts of equity cannot dispense with the regulations prescribed by a statute; at least, where they constitute the apparent policy and object of the statute.⁸

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 2, note (h); Earl of Bath and Montague's case, 3 Ch. Cas. 68; Gilb. Lex Pretoria, p. 305, 306.

² 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 1, art. 2824, 2825, 2897 to 2915.

³ 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 2, art. 2817 to 2932.

⁴ Schenck v. Ellingwood, 3 Edw. Ch. 175.

⁵ Dennison v. Goehring, 7 Barr, 175.

⁶ Porter v. Turner, 3 S. & R. 108.

⁷ 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 1, art. 2830 to 2858; id. 2859 to 2863; id. 2864 to 2873; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, and note (v); id. B. 1, ch. 4 § 25, notes (k, i); id. B. 1, ch. 5, § 2, and note (b).

⁸ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, and note (t); id. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, note (e);

§ 97. As to the defects which may be remedied, they may generally be said to be any which are not of the very essence or substance of the power. Thus, a defect by executing the power by *will*, when it is required to be by a deed, or other instrument, *inter vivos*, will be aided.¹ So, the want of a seal, or of witnesses, or of a signature, and defects in the limitations of the property, estate, or interest, will be aided. And, perhaps, the same rule will apply to defective executions of powers by *femes covert*. But equity will not aid defects which are of the very essence or substance of the power; as, for instance, if the power be executed without the consent of parties, who are required to consent to it. So, if it be required to be executed by *will*, and it is executed by an irrevocable and absolute *deed*; for this is apparently contrary to the settler's intention, a will being always revocable during the life of the testator; whereas, a deed would not be revocable unless expressly so stated in it.²

§ 98. But a class of cases more common in their occurrence, as well as more extensive in their operation, will be found, where trusts, or powers in the nature of trusts, are required to be executed by the trustee in favor of particular persons, and they fail of being so executed by casualty or accident. In all such cases equity will interpose, and grant suitable relief. Thus, for instance, if a testator should, by his will, devise certain estates to A., with directions, that A. should, at his death, distribute the same among his children and relations as he should choose, and A. should die without making such distribution, a court of equity would interfere, and make a suitable distribution; because it is not given to the devisee as a mere power, but as a trust and duty which he

Earl of Darlington *v.* Pulteney, Cowp. 267. But see 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 2, art. 2985 to 2997; *post*, § 169, 177, and note (3); Bright *v.* Boyd, 1 Story, 478.

¹ See Mill *v.* Mills, 8 Irish Eq. 292.

² 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 1, art. 2874 to 2896; *id.* art. 2980; *id.* 2980 to 2984. I have contented myself with these general statements on this confessedly involved topic, as a full investigation of all the doctrines concerning it more properly belongs to a treatise on powers. The learned reader will find the whole subject fully examined, and all the leading authorities brought together, in 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 1, 2, 3, art. 2818 to 3024, and Sugden on Powers, ch. 6, p. 344 to 393 (3d edit.), and Powell on Powers, p. 54, 155, 243, 280. See *post*, § 173, 174. See also 1 White & Tudor, Eq. Lead. Cases, 214.

ought to fulfil; and his omission so to do by accident, or design, ought not to disappoint the objects of the bounty.¹ It would be very different if the case were of a mere naked power, and not a power coupled with a trust.²

§ 99. Another class of cases is, where a testator cancels a former will upon the presumption that a later will made by him is duly executed when it is not. In such a case it has been decided that the former will shall be set up against the heir in a court of equity, and the devisee be relieved there, upon the ground of accident.³ But this class seems more properly to belong to the head of mistake, or of a conditional presumptive revocation, where the condition has failed.⁴

§ 99 a. Courts of equity will also interfere and grant relief (as we shall presently more fully see) where there has been by accident a confusion of the boundaries between two estates.⁵ So they will also grant relief, where, by reason of such confusion of boundaries by accident, the remedy by distress for a rent charged thereon is gone.⁶

§ 99 b. So, where by accident or mistake, upon a transfer of a bill of exchange, or a promissory note, there has been an omission by the party to indorse it according to the intention of the transfer, in such a case, the party, or, in case of his death, his executor or administrator, may be compelled in equity to make the indorsement, and if the party has since become bankrupt, or his estate is

¹ See *Gibbs v. Marsh*, 2 Metc. 243; *Withers v. Yeadon*, 1 Richardson's Eq. 325.

² *Harding v. Glyn*, 1 Atk. 469, and note by Saunders; 2 *White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas.* 685, and notes; *Brown v. Higgs*, 4 Ves. 709; 5 *id.* 495; 8 *id.* 561; 2 *Chance on Powers*, ch. 23, § 1.

³ *Onions v. Tyrer*, 1 P. Will. 343, 345; s. c. 2 Vern. 741; *Prec. Ch.* 459. [* It is questionable whether at the present day, and especially in this country, where the probate of wills, even as to real estate, is confined exclusively to the courts of probate, the courts of chancery would interfere with the execution or revocation of wills during the life of the testator; certainly not, unless to relieve against fraud. But where a will, after the death of the testator, was fraudulently suppressed by those interested in the estate, and by reason thereof, administration was taken without regard to the will, and the will was never proved in the probate court, equity will compel the payment of the legacies given by the will. *Mead v. The Heirs of Langdon*, cited in 22 Verm. 50; *post*, § 254.]

⁴ 1 P. Will. 345, Cox's note; *Burtenshaw v. Gilbert*, Cowp. 49.

⁵ *Mitf. Eq. Pl.* by Jeremy, 117; *post*, § 565, § 615 to 622.

⁶ *Duke of Leeds v. Powell*, 1 Ves. 171; *post*, § 622.

insolvent, his assignees will be compelled to make it; for the transaction amounts to an equitable assignment, and a court of equity will clothe it with a legal effect and title.¹

§ 100. These may suffice, as illustrations of the general doctrine of relief in equity in cases of accident. They all proceed upon the same common foundation, that there is no adequate or complete remedy at law under all the circumstances; that the party has rights which ought to be protected and enforced; or that he will sustain some injury, loss, or detriment, which it would be inequitable to throw upon him.

§ 101. And this leads us, naturally, to the consideration of those cases of accident, in which no relief will be granted by courts of equity. In the first place, in matters of positive contract and obligation, created by the party (for it is different in obligations or duties created by law),² it is no ground for the interference of equity, that the party has been prevented from fulfilling them by accident; or, that he has been in no default; or, that he has been prevented by accident from deriving the full benefit of the contract on his own side.³ Thus, if a lessee on a demise covenants to keep the demised estate in repair, he will be bound in equity as well as in law to do so, notwithstanding any inevitable accident or necessity by which the premises are destroyed or injured; as if they are burnt by lightning, or destroyed by public enemies, or by any other accident, or by overwhelming force. The reason is, that he might have provided for such contingencies by his contract, if he had so chosen; and the law will presume an intentional general liability, where he has made no exception.⁴

§ 102. And the same rule applies in like cases, where there is an express covenant (without any proper exception) to pay rent during the term. It must be paid, notwithstanding the premises

¹ *Watkins v. Maule*, 2 Jac. & Walk. 242; *Chitty on Bills*, ch. 6, p. 263 (8th edit.), 1833; *Bayley on Bills*, ch. 5, § 2, p. 136, 137 (5th edit.), 1830; *post*, § 729.

² *Paradine v. Jane*, Aley, 27. See also *Story on Bailments*, § 25, 35, 36.

³ 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 5, § 8, note (g). See *Com. Dig. Chan. 3 F. 5*; *Berisford v. Done*, 1 Vern. 98.

⁴ *Id. Dyer*, 33 (a); *Chesterfield v. Bolton*, Com. 627; *Bullock v. Dommitt*, 6 T. R. 650; *Brecknock, &c. Canal Company v. Pritchard*, 6 T. R. 750; *Paradine v. Jane*, Aley, 27; *Monk v. Cooper*, 2 Str. 763; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 5, § 8, note (g), p. 374, &c.; *Harrison v. Lord North*, 1 Ch. Cas. 83.

are accidentally burnt down during the term. And this is equally true as to the rent, although the tenant has covenanted to repair, except in cases of casualties by fire, and the premises are burnt down by such casualty; for, *Expressio unius est exclusio alterius*.¹ In all cases of this sort of accidental loss by fire, the rule prevails, *Res perit domino*; and, therefore, the tenant and landlord suffer according to their proportions of interest in the property burnt; the tenant during the term, and the landlord for the residue.

§ 103. And the like doctrine applies to other cases of contract, where the parties stand equally innocent.² Thus, for instance, if there is a contract for a sale at a price to be fixed by an award during the life of the parties, and one of them dies before the award is made, the contract fails, and equity will not enforce it upon the ground of accident; for the time of making the award is expressly fixed in the contract according to the pleasure of the parties; and there is no equity to substitute a different period.³

§ 104. So, if A. should covenant with B. to convey an estate for two lives in a church lease to B. by a certain day, and one of the lives should afterwards drop before the day appointed for the conveyance, B. would be compelled to stand by his contract, and to accept the conveyance; for neither party is in any fault; and B., by the contract, took upon himself the risk by not providing for the accident.⁴ So, if an estate should be sold by A. to B., for a certain sum of money and an annuity, and the agreement should be fair, equity will not grant relief, although the party should die before the payment of any annuity.⁵

§ 105. Courts of equity will not grant relief to a party upon the ground of accident, where the accident has arisen from his own gross negligence or fault; for in such a case the party has no claim to come into a court of justice to ask to be saved from

¹ *Monk v. Cooper*, 2 Str. 763; s. c. 2 Lord Raymond, 1477; *Balfour v. Weston*, 1 T. R. 310; *Fowler v. Bott*, 6 Mass. 63; *Doe v. Sandham*, 1 T. R. 705, 710; *Hallett v. Wylie*, 3 Johns. 44; *Hare v. Groves*, 3 Anst. 687; *Holtzapffel v. Baker*, 18 Ves. 115; *Pym v. Blackburn*, 3 Ves. 34, 38; 1 Fonbl. Equity, B. 1, ch. 5, § 8, note (g); *Cooper*, Eq. Pl. 131.

² Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 F. 5.

³ *Blundell v. Brettargh*, 17 Ves. 232, 240.

⁴ *White v. Nutt*, 1 P. Will. 61.

⁵ *Mortimer v. Capper*, 1 Bro. Ch. 156; *Jackson v. Lever*, 3 Bro. Ch. 605. See also 9 Ves. 246.

his own culpable misconduct. And, on this account, in general, a party coming into a court of equity is bound to show that his title to relief is unmingled with any gross misconduct or negligence of himself or his agents.¹

§ 105 *a.* Courts of equity will not interfere upon the ground of accident, where the party has not a clear vested right; but his claim rests in mere expectancy, and is a matter, not of trust, but of volition. Thus, if a testator, intending to make a will in favor of particular persons, is prevented from doing so by accident, equity cannot grant relief; for it is not in the power of the court to relieve against accidents which prevent voluntary dispositions of estates;² and a legatee or devisee can take only by the bounty of the testator, and has no independent right, until there is a title consummated by law. The same principle applies to a mere naked power, such as a power of appointment, uncoupled with any trust; if it is unexecuted by accident or otherwise, a court of equity will not interfere and execute it, as the party could or might have done.³ But if there be a trust, it will, as we have seen, be otherwise.⁴

§ 106. In the next place, no relief will be granted on account of accident, where the other party stands upon an equal equity, and is entitled to equal protection. Upon this ground, also, equity will not interfere to give effect to an imperfect will against an innocent heir-at-law; for, as heir, he is entitled to protection, whatever might have been the intent of the testator, unless his title is taken away according to the rules of law.⁵

¹ *Marine Insurance Company v. Hodgson*, 7 Cranch, 336. See *Penny v. Martin*, 4 Johns. Ch. 569; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3; *Ex parte Greenway*, 6 Ves. 812. See also 7 Ves. 19, 20; 9 Ves. 467, 468. [* But it has been held, that where an agreement cannot be carried into effect according to the intention of the parties, in consequence of the act of God, or something over which the parties had no control, equity will adopt such an arrangement as the parties would probably have inserted in the agreement, if the contingency had been foreseen. *Chase v. Barrett*, 4 Paige, 148.]

² *Whitton v. Russell*, 1 Atk. 448; 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 46.

³ *Brown v. Higgs*, 8 Ves. 561; *Pierson v. Garnet*, 2 Brown, Ch. 98, 226; *Duke of Marlborough v. Godolphin*, 2 Ves. 61, and *Belt's Supplement*, 277, 278; *Harding v. Glyn*, 1 Atk. 469, and *Saunders's note*; 2 *White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas.* 685, and notes; *Tollet v. Tollet*, 2 P. Will. 489; 1 Fonblq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, note (*h*); *id.* note (*k*); 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 46. ⁴ *Ante*, § 98.

⁵ See *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 3 F. 6, 7, 8; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, notes (*k*), (*n*); *Grounds and Rudim. of the Law*, M. 167, p. 128 (edit. 1751).

§ 107. So, if a tenant for life, or in tail, have a power to raise money, and he raises money by mortgage, without any reference to the power, and not in conformity to it, the mortgage will not bind the heir in tail.¹ So, if a tenant in tail conveys the estate by bargain and sale, or enters into a contract of sale, and covenants to suffer a fine and recovery, and he dies before the fine or recovery is consummated, the heir in tail, or remainder-man, is not bound; for he is deemed a purchaser under the donor, and entitled to protection, as such; and a court of equity will not, further than a court of law, carry into effect against him, any act of a former tenant in tail.²

§ 108. And, generally, against a *bond fide* purchaser, for a valuable consideration, without notice, a court of equity will not interfere on the ground of accident; for, in the view of a court of equity, such a purchaser has as high a claim to assistance and protection as any other person can have.³ Principles of an analogous nature seem to have governed in many of the cases in which the want of a surrender of copyhold has been supplied by courts of equity.⁴

§ 109. Perhaps, upon a general survey of the grounds of equitable jurisdiction in cases of accident, it will be found that they resolve themselves into the following: that the party seeking relief has a clear right, which cannot otherwise be enforced in a suitable manner; or, that he will be subjected to an unjustifiable loss, without any blame or misconduct on his own part; or, that he has a superior equity to the party from whom he seeks the relief.⁵

¹ *Jenkins v. Kemis*, 1 Ch. Cas. 103; s. c. cited 2 P. Will, 667; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, notes (l), (n).

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, and note; id. ch. 4, § 19, and notes; *Weal v. Lower*. 1 Eq. Abridg. 266; *Powell v. Powell*, Prec. Ch. 278.

³ *Mitford*, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 274 X; *Cooper*, Eq. Pl. 281 to 285; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2, and notes; *Malden v. Merrill*, 2 Atk. 8; *Newl. on Contr.* ch. 19, p. 342; *ante*, § 64 c; *post*, § 154, 165, 381, 409 to 411, 416, 434, 436; *Ligon v. Rogers*, 12 Geo. 292.

⁴ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, and note (v).

⁵ Many of the cases on this subject will be found collected in 1 *Mad. Ch. Pr.* ch. 2, § 2, p. 41, &c.; *Jeremy on Equity Jurisd.* ch. 1, p. 359, &c., and 2 *Swift's Digest*, ch. 6, p. 92, &c. See *Baynard v. Norris*, 5 Gill, 477.

CHAPTER V.

MISTAKE.

- [* § 110. Jurisdiction of courts of equity, as founded on mistake of law, or fact.
- § 111. The general rule is, that ignorance of law will not avail; innocent mistake of fact will.
- § 112. If one, by mistake of law, release a co-obligor, or fail to insert a power of revocation, equity will not relieve.
- § 113. Cases of mistake of law.
- § 114, 115. The case of *Hunt v. Rousmaniere* discussed.
- § 116. Lord King's construction of the maxim, *Ignorantia juris, &c.*
- § 117, 118. Ignorance of one's rights a ground of relief.
- § 119. Case of surprise.
- § 120. Mistakes of law as to one's title sometimes ground of relief.
- § 121. Mistake of clear law, as to title, relievable; *aliter*, if doubtful.
- § 122-130. The distinction between mistakes of law and of fact further discussed, and the cases compared.
- § 131-133. The validity of compromises. How affected by the ignorance or suppression of material facts. Family settlements.
- § 134. Mistake of law, with surprise, ground of relief.
- § 135. So also where there exists special confidence.
- § 136. Relief from the defective nature of instruments.
- § 137, 138. The rule more specifically defined.
- § 138 a-138 k. The present state of the law considered.
- § 139. Mistake of title no ground of relief against a *bonâ fide* purchaser.
- § 139, 140. The distinction between mistakes of fact, and of law.
- § 141. The mistake must be material.
- § 142-144. Where the parties are under mutual misapprehension as to the existence, or essential condition of the subject-matter of a contract, equity will relieve.
- § 144 a. But not against a mere mistaken estimate of quantity or quality.
- § 145. Equity will restrain the operation of general words.
- § 146. But will not relieve from one's own negligence.
- § 147, 148. Or where the mistake was made by one party, and there was no breach of confidence.
- § 149. Or where the mistake is not in regard to essential, inherent qualities.
- § 150, 151. Where there is material mistake, equity will not interfere, unless the error is fundamental.
- § 152-156. Equity will reform written contracts, upon oral proof, to defeat fraud and oppression.
- § 157. But the proof must be unquestionable.
- § 158, 159. The extent to, and the grounds upon, which equity interferes.
- § 160-162. Will interfere, when mistake is proved by other writings, or by parol, or is clearly implied.
- § 163-164 e. But not where the implication is rebutted, or against a surety. Other points and new cases.
- § 165. Will only interfere as to the original parties and those standing in the same right.

- § 166. Will interfere to supply defects.
 § 167. And when contract has been cancelled by mistake.
 § 168. Will effectuate the true intention.
 § 169-172. Equity will aid the defective execution of a power, but not the non-execution.
 § 173. But a power of appointment by will cannot be executed by an absolute deed.
 § 174. Will aid defective execution by will, but not a defective power.
 § 175. Will not cure defects of substance.
 § 176. Will not aid volunteers unless misled without fault.
 § 177. Will not relieve against the express provisions of a statute.
 § 178. Will not aid a defective fine, or recovery.
 § 179, 180. Will correct mistakes apparent on the face of the will.
 § 180 a-183. This is done with caution, and not always wisely then.]

§ 110. WE may next pass to the consideration of the jurisdiction of the courts of equity, founded upon the ground of mistake. This is sometimes the result of accident, in its large sense; but, as contradistinguished from it, it is some unintentional act, or omission, or error, arising from ignorance, surprise, imposition, or misplaced confidence.¹ Mistakes are ordinarily divided into two sorts: mistakes in matter of law, and mistakes in matter of fact.

§ 111. And first, in regard to mistakes in matter of law. It is a well-known maxim, that ignorance of law will not furnish an excuse for any person, either for a breach, or for an omission of duty; *Ignorantia legis neminem excusat*; and this maxim is equally as much respected in equity as in law.² It probably be-

¹ Mr. Jeremy defines mistake, in the sense of a court of equity, to be, "that result of ignorance of law or of fact, which has misled a person to commit that, which, if he had not been in error, he would not have done." Jeremy, *Eq. Jurid. B. 3, Pt. 2, p. 358*. This definition seems too narrow, and it does not comprehend cases of omission or neglect. May there not be a mistake from surprise, or imposition, as well as from ignorance of law or fact?

² *Bilbie v. Lumley*, 2 East, 469; *Doct. & Stud. Dial.* 1 ch. 26, p. 92; *id. Dial.* 2, ch. 46, p. 303; *Stevens v. Lynch*, 12 East, 38; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 7, note (e)*; *Hunt v. Rousmaniere's Adm'rs*, 8 Wheaton, 174; s. c. 1 *Peters, Sup. C. 1*; s. c. 2 *Mason*, 342; 3 *Mason*, 294; *Stone v. Hale*, 17 Ala. 561; *Frank v. Frank*, 1 Ch. Cas. 84. How far money paid under a mistake of law, is, as the civil law phrases it, liable to *repetition*, that is, to a recovery back, has been a matter much discussed by civilians, and upon which they are divided in opinion. Pothier and Heineccius maintain the negative; Vinnius and D'Aguesseau the affirmative, the latter especially in a very masterly dissertation. Sir W. D. Evans, in the Appendix to his translation of Pothier on Obligations (Vol. 2, p. 406 to 437), has given a translation of D'Aguesseau and Vinnius; and Sir W. D. Evans has prefixed to them a view of his own reasoning in support of the

longs to some of the earliest rudiments of English jurisprudence; and is certainly so old, as to have been long laid up among its settled elements. We find it stated with great clearness and force in the Doctor and Student, where it is affirmed, that every man is bound at his peril to take knowledge what the law of the realm is; as well the law made by statute, as the common law.¹ The probable ground for the maxim is that suggested by Lord Ellenborough, that otherwise there is no saying to what extent the excuse of ignorance might not be carried.² Indeed, one of the remarkable

same doctrine (*id.* vol. 2, p. 369). The text of the Roman law seems manifestly on the other side, although the force of the text has been attempted to be explained away, or at least limited. The Digest (Lib. 22, tit. 6, l. 9, § 3, 5) says: "Ignorantia facti, non juris, prodesse; nec stultis solere succurri, sed errantibus;" and still more explicitly the Code says (Lib. 1, tit. 18, l. 10), "Cum quis jus ignorans indebitam pecuniam solveret, cessat repetitio; per ignorantiam enim facti tantum repetitionem indebiti soluti competere tibi notum est." See also 1 Pothier, Oblig. Pt. 4, ch. 3, § 1, n. 834; 1 Evans's Pothier on Oblig. 523, 524; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 22, tit. 6; Cujaccii Opera, Tom. 4, p. 502; Comm. ad Leg. vii. de Jur. et Fact.; Ignor. Heinecc. ad. Pand. Lib. 22, tit. 6, § 146; 1 Domat, Civil Law, B. 1, tit. 18, § 1, n. 13 to 17. But the question is a very different one, how far a promise to pay is a binding obligation; for a party may not be bound by the latter to pay, although he may not, if he has paid the money, be entitled to recover it back. Heineccius (*ubi supra*) insists on this distinction, founding himself on the Roman Law. Cujaccius also insists on the same distinction (Cujac. Opera, Tom. 4, 506, 507, edit. 1758). D'Aguesseau denies the distinction, as not founded in reason, and insists on the same right in both cases. Sir W. D. Evans holds the same opinion; but insists, at all events, that a mere promise to pay, under a mistake of law, is not binding. 2 Evans's Pothier on Oblig. 395, &c. There is certainly great force in his reasoning. It has, however, been rejected by the English courts; and a promise to pay, upon a supposed liability, and in ignorance of the law, has been held to bind the party. *Stevens v. Lynch*, 12 East, 38; *Goodman v. Sayers*, 2 Jac. & Walk. 263; *Brisbane v. Dacres*, 5 Taunt. 143; *East India Company v. Tritton*, 3 B. & Cressw. 280. Mr. Chancellor Kent held a doctrine equally extensive in *Shotwell v. Murray*, 1 Johns. Ch. 512, 516. See also *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 166; *Clarke v. Dutcher*, 9 Cowen, 674. In Massachusetts it has been held, that money, paid under a mistake of law, may be recovered back; and, at all events, that a promise to pay, under a mistake of law, cannot be enforced. *May v. Coffin*, 4 Mass. 342; *Warder v. Tucker*, 7 Mass. 452; *Freeman v. Boynton*, 7 Mass. 488. See also *Haven v. Foster*, 9 Pick. 112, in which there is a very learned argument by counsel on each side, on the general doctrine, and the opinions of civilians, as well as the common-law decisions, are copiously cited.

¹ Doct. & Stud. Dial. 2, ch. 46.

² *Bilbie v. Lumley*, 2 East, 469, 472.

tendencies of the English common law upon all subjects of a general nature is, to aim at practical good, rather than theoretical perfection; and to seek less to administer justice in all possible cases than to furnish rules which shall secure it in the common course of human business. If, upon the mere ground of ignorance of the law, men were admitted to overhaul or extinguish their most solemn contracts, and especially those which have been executed by a complete performance, there would be much embarrassing litigation in all judicial tribunals, and no small danger of injustice, from the nature and difficulty of the proper proofs.¹ The presumption is, that every person is acquainted with his own rights, provided he has had a reasonable opportunity to know them. And nothing can be more liable to abuse, than to permit a person to reclaim his property upon the mere pretence, that at the time of parting with it, he was ignorant of the law acting on his title.² Mr. Fonblanque has accordingly laid it down as a general proposition, that in courts of equity ignorance of the law shall not affect agreements, nor excuse from the legal consequences of particular acts.³ And he is fully borne out by authorities.⁴

§ 112. One of the most common cases, put to illustrate the doctrine, is, where two are bound by a bond, and the obligee releases one, supposing, by a mistake of law, that the other will remain

¹ *Lyon v. Richmond*, 2 Johns. Ch. 51, 60; *Shotwell v. Murray*, 1 Johns. Ch. 512; *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 169, 170.

² See *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 169; *Proctor v. Thrall*, 22 Verm. 262.

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 7, note (v); 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 60. But see *Moseley's Rep.* 364; 1 Ves. 127; *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 169, 170; *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 1 Peters, 1, 15, 16.

⁴ The doctrine was pushed to a great extent (as Mr. Fonblanque has remarked) in *Willey v. Cooper Company*, cited in a note to *East v. Thornbury*, 3 P. Will. 127, note B. and *Atwood v. Lamprey* (*ibid.*), in which a tenant, who had paid a rent or annuity charged on land, without deducting the land tax, was not allowed to recover back the amount by a bill in equity. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 7, note (v). There is an appearance of hardship in this doctrine; but it has been fully recognized in a late case, where an executor paid interest on a legacy without deducting the property tax. *Currie v. Goold*, 2 Mad. 163; and *Smith v. Jackson*, 1 Mad. 623. Lord Hardwicke also acted upon the same doctrine in *Nichols v. Leeson*, 3 Atk. 573. The cases resolve themselves into an over-payment by mistake of law, or of fact; and probably of the former. But it does not appear in any of these cases, that the mistake was not mutual. It is a little difficult to reconcile these cases with the doctrine in *Bingham v. Bingham*, 1 Ves. 126, and *Belt's Supp.* 79.

bound. In such a case the obligee will not be relieved in equity upon the mere ground of his mistake of the law;¹ for there is nothing inequitable in the co-obligor's availing himself of his legal rights, nor of the other obligor's insisting upon his release, if they have both acted *bonâ fide*, and there has been no fraud or imposition on their side to procure the release.² So, where a party had a power of appointment, and executed it absolutely, without introducing a power of revocation, upon a mistake of law, that being a voluntary deed, it was revocable, relief was in like manner denied.³ If the power of revocation had been intended to be put into the appointment, and omitted by a mistake in the draft, it would have been a very different matter.

§ 113. The same principle applies to agreements entered into in good faith, but under a mistake of the law. They are generally held valid and obligatory upon the parties.⁴ Thus, where a clause

¹ Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 F. 8; *Harmon v. Cannon*, 4 Vin. Abridg. 387, pl. 3; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 7, note (v). See also 1 Peters, Sup. C. 17; 1 P. Will. 723, 727; 2 Atk. 591; 2 Johns. Ch. 51; 4 Pick. 6, 17; *Cann v. Cann*, 1 P. Will. 723, 727. But see *Ex parte Gifford*, 6 Ves. 805, and the comments by Lord Denman on that case in *Nicholson v. Revell*, 6 Nev. & Mann. 192, 200; s. c. 4 Adolph. & Ellis, 675. See also *McNaughten v. Partridge*, 11 Ohio, 223; *Sale v. Dishman*, 3 Leigh, 548.

² In such a case, there is no doubt that the releasee is discharged at law. In *Nicholson v. Revell*, 6 Nev. & Mann, 200, 292, s. c. 4 Adolph. & Ellis, 675, a discharge of one party on a joint and several note was held to be a discharge of both. s. p. *Cheetham v. Ward*, 1 Bos. & Pull. 630; *Hoosack v. Rogers*, 8 Paige, 229.

³ *Worrall v. Jacob*, 3 Meriv. 195. See also 1 Peters, Sup. C. 16.

⁴ *Pullen v. Ready*, 2 Atk. 591; *Stockley v. Stockley*, 2 Ves. & B. 23, 30; *Frank v. Frank*, 7 Ch. Cas. 84; *Mildmay v. Hungerford*, 2 Vern. 243; *Shotwell v. Murray*, 1 Johns. Ch. 512; *Lyon v. Richmond*, 2 Johns. Ch. 51; *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 1 Peters, Sup. C. 1, 15; *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 169, 170. Some of the cases commonly cited under this head are cases of family agreements, to preserve family honor, or family peace; and some of them are compromises of right, thought at the time to be doubtful by all the parties. The cases of *Stapilton v. Stapilton*, 1 Atk. 10; *Stockley v. Stockley*, 1 Ves. & B. 23; *Cory v. Cory*, 1 Ves. 19; *Gordon v. Gordon*, 3 Swanst. 463, 467, 471, 474, 477, and perhaps *Frank v. Frank*, 1 Ch. Cas. 84, are of the former sort. And it has been said by Lord Eldon, that in family arrangements an equity is administered in equity, which is not applied to agreements generally. 1 Ves. & B. 30; *Neale v. Neale*, 1 Keen, 672, 683. Compromises of doubtful right stand upon a distinct ground; for in such cases the parties are equal, and it is for the public interest to suppress litigation. *Cann v. Cann*, 1 P. Will. 723; 1 Ves. & B. 30; 1 Atk. 10; *Naylor v. Winch*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 564, 565. But of these doctrines a more

containing a power of redemption, in a deed granting an annuity, after it had been agreed to, was deliberately excluded by the parties upon a mistake of law, that it would render the contract usurious; the court of chancery refused to restore the clause, or to grant relief.¹ Lord Eldon, in commenting on this case, said that it went upon an indisputable clear principle, that the parties did not mean to insert in the agreement a provision for redemption, because they were all of one mind that it would be ruinous. And they desired the court to do, not what they intended, for the insertion of that provision was directly contrary to their intention; but they desired to be put in the same situation, as if they had been better informed, and consequently had a contrary intention.² So, where a devise was given upon condition that a woman should marry with the consent of her parents, and she married without such consent, whereby a forfeiture accrued to other parties, who afterwards executed an agreement respecting the estate, whereby the forfeiture was in effect waived, the court refused any relief, although it was contended, that it was upon a mistake of law. Lord Hardwicke, on that occasion, said: "It is said, they (the parties) might know the fact, and yet not know the consequence of law. But if parties are entering into an agreement, and the very will, out of which the forfeiture arose, is lying before them and their counsel, while the drafts are preparing, the parties shall be supposed to be acquainted with the consequence of law as to this point; and shall not be relieved on a pretence of being surprised, with such strong circumstances attending it."³ So, where the plaintiff was tenant for life with remainder to his first and other sons in tail, remainder to the defendant in fee; and his wife being then *privement enseint* of a son, he was advised, that, if he bought the reversion of the defendant, and took a surrender, it would merge his estate for life, and destroy the contingent remainder in his sons, and give him a fee; and he accordingly bought the reversion, and gave security for the purchase-money; and, upon a discovery of his mistake of the

full discussion belongs to the text. *Post*, § 120, 121, 122, 126, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132.

¹ *Irnham v. Child*, 1 Bro. Ch. 92. See 6 Ves. 332, 333; 1 Peters, Sup. C. 16, 17; 2 White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas. 530, and notes.

² *Marquis of Townshend v. Strangroom*, 6 Ves. 332. See also *Lord Portmore v. Morris*, 2 Bro. Ch. 219; *Hunt v. Rousmaniere's Administrators*, 2 Mason, 366, 367.

³ *Pullen v. Ready*, 2 Atk. 587, 591.

law, he brought a bill to be relieved against the security, it was denied, unless upon payment of the full amount.¹

§ 114. Another illustration may be derived from a case, most vigorously contested and critically discussed, where, upon the loan of money, for which security was to be given, the parties deliberately took, after consultation with counsel, a letter of attorney, with a power to sell the property (ships) in case of non-payment of the money, instead of a mortgage upon the property itself, upon the mistake of law, that the security by the former instrument would, in case of death or other accident, bind the property to the same extent as a mortgage. The debtor died, and his estate being insolvent, a bill in equity was brought by the creditor against the administrators to reform the instrument, or to give him a priority by way of lien on the property, in exclusion of the general creditors. The court, finally, after the most deliberate examination of the case at three successive stages of the cause, denied relief, upon the ground that the agreement was for a particular security selected by the parties, and not for security generally; and that the court were asked to substitute another security for that selected by the parties, not upon any mistake of fact, but upon a mistake of law, when such security was not within the scope of their agreement.²

§ 115. It is manifest that the whole controversy in this case turned upon the point, whether a court of equity could grant relief, where a security becomes ineffectual, not by fraud or accident, or because it is not what the parties intended it to be; but because, conforming to that intention, the parties in executing it innocently mistook the law. It was the very security the parties had deliberately selected; but, by unforeseen events, it was not as good a security as they might have selected. It would have been most extraordinary and unprecedented for a court of equity, under such circumstances, to grant relief; for it would be equivalent to decreeing a new agreement, not contemplated by the parties, instead of executing that actually made by them. If the party, who was to execute the power of attorney, had refused that, and offered

¹ *Mildmay v. Hungerford*, 2 Vern. 243.

² *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 8 Wheat. 174; 1 *Peters*, Sup. C. 1, 13, 14; s. c. 2 *Mason*, 342; 3 *Mason*, 294. See similar instances in *Greenwood v. Eldridge*, 1 *Green's Ch.* 145; *Dow v. Kerr*, 1 *Speer's Eq.* 113-421; *Leavitt v. Palmer*, 3 *Coms.* 19.

a mortgage, could he have insisted on such a substitute? If a mortgage had been agreed on, could he have compelled the other side to have accepted a letter of attorney? Certainly not. Equity may compel parties to execute their agreements; but it has no authority to make agreements for them, or to substitute one for another. If there had been any mistake in the instrument itself, so that it did not contain what the parties had agreed on, that would have formed a very different case; for where an instrument is drawn and executed, which professes, or is intended to carry into execution an agreement previously entered into, but which, by mistake of the draftsman, either as to fact or to law, does not fulfil that intention, or violates it, equity will correct the mistake, so as to produce a conformity to the instrument.¹

§ 116. In a preceding section² it has been stated, that agreements made and acts done under a mistake of law are (if not otherwise objectionable) generally held valid and obligatory. The doctrine is laid down in this guarded and qualified manner, because it is not to be disguised, that there are authorities, which are supposed to contradict it, or at least to form exceptions to it. Indeed in one case, Lord King is reported to have said, that the maxim of law, *Ignorantia juris non excusat*, was, in regard to the public, that ignorance cannot be pleaded in excuse of crimes; but that it did not hold in civil cases.³ This broad statement is utterly irreconcilable with the well-established doctrine both of courts of law and courts of equity. The general rule certainly is (as has been very clearly stated by the Supreme Court of the United States) that a mistake of the law is not a ground for reforming a deed, founded on such a mistake. And whatever exceptions there may be to this rule, they are not only few in number, but they will be found to have something peculiar in their character, and to involve other elements of decision.⁴

¹ See the able opinion of Mr. Justice Washington in *Hunt v. Rousmaniere's Adm'rs*, 1 Peters, Sup. C. 13-17. See *Heacock v. Fly*, 14 Penn. St. 541.

² *Ante*, § 113.

³ *Lansdowne v. Lansdowne*, Moseley, 364; s. c. 2 Jac. & Walk. 205. [And this doctrine was approved in *Wyche v. Greene*, 16 Georgia, 58, as "righteous and legal." *Contra*, *McAninch v. Laughlin*, 13 Penn. St. 371].

⁴ *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 1 Peters, Sup. C. 15; s. c. 8 Wheaton, 211, 212. See also *Hepburn v. Dunlap*, 10 Wheaton, 179, 195; *Shotwell v. Murray*, 1 Johns. Ch. 512, 515; *Lyon v. Richmond*, 2 Johns. Ch. 51, 60; *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 169, 170. Mr. Chancellor Kent has laid down the doctrine in equally

§ 117. In illustration of this remark, we may refer to a case, commonly cited as an exception to the general rule. In that case, the daughter of a freeman of London had a legacy of £10,000, left by her father's will, upon condition that she should release her orphanage share; and, after her father's death, she accepted the legacy, and executed the release. Upon a bill, afterwards filed by her against her brother, who was the executor, the release was set aside, and she was restored to her orphanage share, which amounted to £40,000. Lord-Chancellor Talbot, in making the decree, admitted, that there was no fraud in her brother, who had told her that she was entitled to her election to take an account of her father's personal estate, and to claim her orphanage share; but she chose to accept the legacy. His lordship said: "It is true, it appears, the son (the defendant) did inform the daughter, that she was bound either to waive the legacy given by the father, or release her right to the custom. And, so far, she might know that it was in her power to accept either the legacy or orphanage part. But I hardly think she knew she was entitled to have an account taken of the personal estate of her father; and first to know, what her orphanage part did amount to; and that when she should be fully apprised of this, then, and not till then, she was to make her election; which very much alters the case. For, probably, she would not have elected to accept her legacy, had she known, or been informed, what her orphanage part amounted unto, before she waived it and accepted the legacy."¹

§ 118. It is apparent, from this language, that the decision of his lordship rested upon mixed considerations, and not exclusively upon mere mistake or ignorance of the law by the daughter. There was no fraud in her brother; but it is clear, that she relied upon her brother for knowledge of her rights and duties in point of law; and he, however innocently, omitted to state some most

strong terms. "It is rarely," says he, "that a mistake in point of law, with a full knowledge of all the facts, can afford ground for relief, or be considered as a sufficient indemnity against the injurious consequences of deception practised upon mankind, &c. It would therefore seem to be a wise principle of policy, that ignorance of the law with a knowledge of the facts, cannot generally be set up as a defence." *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 169, 170; *Lyon v. Saunders*, 23 Miss. 124; *Shafer v. Davis*, 13 Illinois, 395. See *Emmet v. Dewhirst*, 8 Eng. Law & Eq. 83.

¹ *Pusey v. Desbouvrie*, 3 P. Will. 315, 321; 2 Ball & Beat. 182. See *Pickering v. Pickering*, 2 Beavan, 31, 56.

material legal considerations, affecting her rights and duty. She acted under this misplaced confidence, and was misled by it; which of itself constituted no inconsiderable ground for relief. But a far more weighty reason is, that she acted under ignorance of facts; for she neither knew, nor had any means of knowing what her orphanage share was, when she made her election. It was, therefore, a clear case of surprise in matters of fact, as well as of law. [*But we should be careful not to understand the proposition here laid down, as having any just application to the subject of compromising doubtful and uncertain rights; or to the disposition of contingent or uncertain interests. In such cases, where the parties have equal means of knowledge, no relief in equity will be afforded, on the ground of results being different from what the parties anticipated. For this is one of the hazards of that class of contracts which each party incurs, by the very nature of the contract.] No ultimate decision was made in the case, it being compromised by the parties.²

§ 119. The case of *Evans v. Llewellyn*³ is exclusively put in the decree upon the ground of surprise, "the conveyance having been obtained and executed by the plaintiffs improvidently." It was admitted, that there was no sufficient proof of fraud or imposition practised upon the plaintiff (though the facts might well lead to some doubt on that point); and the plaintiff was certainly not ignorant of any of the facts, which respected his rights. The master of the rolls (Sir Lloyd Kenyon, afterwards Lord Kenyon) said: "The party was taken by surprise. He had not sufficient time to act with caution; and therefore, though there was no actual fraud, it is something like fraud; for an undue advantage was taken of his situation. I am of opinion, that the party was not competent to protect himself; and therefore this court is bound to afford him such protection; and therefore these deeds ought to be set aside, as *improvidently* obtained. If the plaintiff had, in fact, gone back, I should have rescinded the transaction."⁴

¹ [**Holcomb v. Stimpson*, 8 Vt. 141. And if it should subsequently appear that the parties were mistaken in their apprehension of their rights, that alone will not affect the validity of any compromise, or contract, based upon such misapprehension. *Union Bank of Georgetown v. Geary*, 5 Peters, 98.]

² See *Heacock v. Fly*, 14 Penn. St. 541.

³ 2 Bro. Ch. 150; 1 Cox, 333, more full

⁴ 1 Cox, 340, 341.

§ 120. The most general class of cases relied on as exceptions to the rule, is that class where the party has acted under a misconception, or ignorance to his title to the property, respecting which some agreement has been made, or conveyance executed. So far as ignorance in point of fact of any title in the party is an ingredient in any of these cases, they fall under a very different consideration.¹ But so far as the party, knowing all the facts, has acted upon a mistake of the law, applicable to his title, they are proper to be discussed in this place. Upon a close survey, many, although not all, of the cases, in the latter predicament, will be found to have turned, not upon the consideration of a mere mistake of law, stripped of all other circumstances, but upon an admixture of other ingredients, going to establish misrepresentation, imposition, undue confidence, undue influence, mental imbecility, or that sort of surprise, which equity uniformly regards as a just foundation for relief.²

¹ See *Ramsden v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 304; *Cann v. Cann*, 1 P. Will. 727; *Farewell v. Coker*, cited 2 Meriv. 269; *McCarthy v. Decaix*, 2 Russ. & Mylne, 614. In this case, Lord Chancellor Brougham held, that where a husband renounced his title to his wife's property, from whom he had been divorced, under a mistake in point of law, that the divorce was valid, and he had no longer any title to her property, and under a mistake of fact as to the amount of property renounced, the information respecting which the other party knew and withheld from him, he was entitled to relief. But the relief seems to have been granted upon mixed considerations. His lordship, in one part of his opinion, said: "What he (the husband) has done was in ignorance of law, possibly of fact; but in a case of this kind, that would be one and the same thing." See also *Corking v. Pratt*, 1 Ves. 400.

² See *Willan v. Willan*, 16 Ves. 82. Mr. Jeremy (Eq. Jurisd. Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 366) seems to suppose that there is something technical in the meaning of the word *surprise* as used in courts of equity; for, speaking upon what, he says, is technically called a case of surprise, he adds, "which [surprise] it seems is a term for the immediate result of a certain species of mistake, upon which this court will relieve," a definition or description not very intelligible, and rather tending to obscure than to clear up the subject. In another place (ch. 8, p. 383, note) he says, that surprise is often used as synonymous with fraud; but that "they may, perhaps, be distinguished by the circumstance, that in instances to which the term *fraud* is applied, an unjust design is presupposed; but that in those to which surprise is assigned, no fraudulent intention is to be presumed. In the former case, one of the parties seeks to injure the other; in the latter, both of them act under an actual misconception of the law." Whether this explanation makes the matter much clearer may be doubted. The truth is, that there does not seem any thing technical or peculiar in the word *surprise*, as used in courts of equity. The common definition of Johnson sufficiently explains its

§ 121. It has been laid down, as unquestionable doctrine, that if a party, acting in ignorance of a plain and settled principle of law, is induced to give up a portion of his indisputable property to another, under the name of a compromise, a court of equity will relieve him from the effect of his mistake.¹ But, where a doubtful question arises, such as a question respecting the true construction of a will, a different rule prevails; and a compromise fairly entered into, with due deliberation, will be upheld in a court of equity, as reasonable in itself, to terminate the differences by dividing the stake, and as supported by principles of public policy.²

§ 122. In regard to the first proposition, the terms in which it is expressed have the material qualification, that the party has,

sense. He defines it to be the act of taking unawares; the state of being taken unawares; sudden confusion or perplexity. When a court of equity relieves on the ground of surprise, it does so upon the ground that the party has been taken unawares, that he has acted without due deliberation, and under confused and sudden impressions. The case of *Evans v. Llewellyn*, 2 Bro. Ch. 150, is a direct authority to this very view of the matter. There may be cases, where the word *surprise* is used in a more lax sense, and where it is deemed presumptive of, or approaching to, fraud (1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 8, p. 125; *Earl of Bath and Montague's case*, 3 Ch. Cas. 56, 74, 103, 114). But it will always be found that the true use of it is, where something has been done which was unexpected and operated to mislead or confuse the parties on the sudden, and on that account has been deemed a fraud. See *Earl of Bath and Montague's case*, 3 Ch. Cas. 56, 74, 114; *Irnham v. Child*, 1 Bro. Ch. 92; *Marquis of Townshend v. Stan-groom*, 6 Ves. 327, 338; *Twining v. Morrice*, 2 Bro. Ch. 326; *Willan v. Willan*, 16 Ves. 81, 86, 87. In *Evans v. Llewellyn*, 1 Cox, 340, the master of the rolls, adverting to the cases of surprise where an undue advantage is taken of the party's situation, said: "The cases of infants dealing with guardians, of sons with fathers, all proceed upon the same general principles, and establish this, that if the party is in a situation in which he is not a free agent, and is not equal to protecting himself, this court will protect him. See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 8. See *post*, § 234, 235, and note (1), § 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 242.

¹ *Naylor v. Winch*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 555. See also 1 Ves. 126; *Moseley*, 364; 2 Jac. & Walk. 205; *Leonard v. Leonard*, 2 B. & Beatt. 180; *Dunnage v. White*, 1 Swanst. 137. See *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 8 Wheaton, 211 to 215; s. c. 1 Peters, Sup. Ct. 1, 15, 16; *Gudon v. Gudon*, 3 Swanst. 400. In the very case in which the doctrine is laid down in such general terms, relief was denied, because the claim was doubtful, and the compromise was after due deliberation. *Naylor v. Winch*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 555. Is there any distinction between ignorance of a principle of law, and mistake of a principle of law, as to this point? See 1 Madd. Ch. Pr. 61.

² *Ibid.*; *Pickering v. Pickering*, 2 Beaven, 31, 56.

upon plain and settled principles of law, a clear title, and yet is in gross ignorance that he possesses any title whatsoever. Thus, in England, if the eldest son, who is heir-at-law of all the undisposed of fee-simple estates of his ancestor, should, in gross ignorance of the law, knowing, however, that he was the eldest son, agree to divide the estates with a younger brother; such an agreement, executed or unexecuted, would be held, in a court of equity, invalid, and relief would be accordingly granted. In a case thus strongly put, there may be ingredients, which would give a coloring to the case, independent of the mere ignorance of the law. If the younger son were not equally ignorant, there would be much ground to suspect fraud, imposition, misrepresentation, or undue influence on his part.¹ And if he were equally ignorant, the case would exhibit such a gross mistake of rights, as would lead to the conclusion of such great mental imbecility, or surprise, or blind and credulous confidence, on the part of the eldest son, as might fairly entitle him to the protection of a court of equity upon general principles.² Indeed, where the party acts upon the misapprehension that he has no title at all in the property, it seems to involve in some measure a mistake of fact; that is, of the fact of ownership, arising from a mistake of law. A party can hardly be said to intend to part with a right or title, of whose existence he is wholly ignorant; and if he does not so intend, a court of equity will, in ordinary cases, relieve him from the legal effect of instruments which surrender such unsuspected right or title.³

¹ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 366; *Leonard v. Leonard*, 2 B. & Beatt. 182.

² See *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 8 Wheat. 211, 212, 214; s. c. 1 Peters, Sup. Ct. 15, 16; s. c. 2 Mason, 342; 3 Mason, 294. See Ayliffe's Pand. B. 2, tit. 15, p. 116.

³ See *Ramsden v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 304; 2 Meriv. 269. I am aware that, generally, where the facts are known, the mistake of the title of heirship is treated as a mistake of law. Indeed, in the civil law it is put as the most prominent illustration of the distinction between ignorance of fact and ignorance of law. *Si quis nesciat se cognatum esse, interdum in jure, interdum in facto, errat. Nam si et liberum se esse, et ex quibus natus sit, sciat, jura autem cognationis habere si nesciat in jure errat. At si quis forte expositus, quorum parentum esset, ignoret, fortasse et serviat alicui, putans se servum esse; in facto, magis quam in jure errat.* Dig. Lib. 22, tit. 6, l. 1, § 2; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 22, tit. 6, § 1, n. 1; 1 Domat Civil Law, B. 1, tit. 18, § 1, n. 4. Is ownership or heirship a conclusion of law, or of fact, or a mixed result of both? Is title to an estate a fact or not? Is ignorance of the title, when all the facts on which it

§ 123. One of the earliest cases on this subject is *Turner v. Turner* (in 31 Car. 2),¹ where the plaintiff's father had lent a sum on mortgage to A., who mortgaged lands to the father and his heirs, with a proviso, that, on payment of the money to the father, or his heirs, the premises were to be reconveyed to A. The plaintiff was executor of his father, and claimed the mortgage, as vesting in the executor, and not in the heirs. The defendant was the son and heir-at-law of the plaintiff's eldest brother, and set up a release of this mortgage, and an allotment of it to him, upon an agreement made among the heirs for a division of the personal estate, and a subsequent receipt of the mortgage by him. The plaintiff insisted, that, at the time of the release, he looked on the mortgage as belonging to the defendant, as heir-at-law, and knew not his own title thereto; and that the mortgage was worth £8,000, and the shares on the division only £250 apiece. The lord chancellor (Lord Nottingham) relieved the plaintiff, stating that the plaintiff had an undoubted right to the mortgaged premises. This case is reported, without any statement of the grounds of the decision, so that it is impossible now to ascertain them. There may have been surprise, or imposition, or undue influence; or the defendant might have well known the plaintiff's rights, and suppressed his own knowledge of them. If it proceeded upon the naked ground of a mistake of law, it is not easily reconcilable with other cases. But, if it proceeded upon the ground that the plaintiff had no knowledge of his title to the mortgage, and therefore did not intend to release any title to it, the release might well be relieved against, as going beyond the intentions of the parties, upon a mutual mistake of the law. It might, then, be deemed, in some sort, a mistake of fact, as well as of law. It was certainly a plain mistake of the settled law; and, if both parties acted under a mu-

legally depends, are known, ignorance of a fact, or of law? Mr. Powell puts the case of *Lansdowne v. Lansdowne* (Moseley, 364) as a case of misrepresentation of a fact, that is, that the party was not heir, when in fact he was heir. See 2 Powell on Contracts, 196. An error of law, in relation to heirship, is not, in the civil law, always fatal to the party. It will not deprive him of a right resulting from his heirship; as, if a nephew accounts with an uncle for the whole effects of a deceased brother, upon the mistake of law that the uncle was sole heir, he shall be restored to his rights. 1 Domat, Civil Law, B. 1, tit. 18, § 1, n. 15. The rule of the civil law is, *juris ignorantia non prodest adquirere volentibus; suum vero petentibus non nocet*. Dig. Lib. 22, tit. 6, l. 7.

¹ 2 Rep. in Ch. 81 [154].

tual misconception of their actual rights, they could not justly be said to have intended what they did. Mutual misapprehension of rights, as well as of the effect of agreements, may properly furnish, in some cases, a ground for relief.¹

§ 124. In *Bingham v. Bingham*,² there was a devise by A. to his eldest son and heir B., in fee tail, limiting the reversion to his own right heirs. B. left no issue, and devised the estate to the plaintiff. The defendant had brought an ejectment for the estate under the will; and the plaintiff purchased the estate of the defendant for £80, under a mistake of law, that the devise to him, by B., could not convey the fee. Having paid the purchase-money, he now brought his bill to have it refunded, alleging in the bill, that he was ignorant of the law, and persuaded by the defendant and his scrivener and conveyancer, that B. had no power to make the devise. The master of the rolls, sitting for Lord Hardwicke, granted the relief, saying, that, though no fraud appeared, and the defendant apprehended he had a right, yet there was a plain mistake, such as the court was warranted to relieve against. It is certainly not very easy to reconcile this case with the general doctrine already stated. It is admitted by the report, that the defendant supposed he had a right; and, indeed, it was probably a case of a family compromise upon a doubted, if not a doubtful right, and a mutual claim, and a mutual ignorance of the law. If so, it trenches upon that class of cases, and is inconsistent with them. If, on the other hand, the defendant's title was adverse, and not a family controversy; still, if the agreement was fairly entered into by the contending parties, it is difficult to perceive why it should have been set aside, merely because in the event the title turned out to be in the plaintiff.³ There were, probably, some circumstances in the case material to a decision, which have not reached us; otherwise, it would conflict with other cases already cited.⁴

¹ *Willan v. Willan*, 16 Ves. 81, 82, 85.

² 1 Ves. 126; *Belt's Sup.* 79. See *Leonard v. Leonard*, 2 B. & Beatt. 183.

³ See *Leonard v. Leonard*, 2 B. & Beatt. 171, 180, 182.

⁴ Mr. Belt, in his Supplement (p. 79), has given a more full account of the facts of the case, from the Register's Book, which I have followed. As a family compromise, or a compromise with a stranger, claiming an adverse right under a mutual mistake, but in good faith, it is difficult to find any support for it in other authorities. See *Stockley v. Stockley*, 1 V. & B. 23; *Cory v. Cory*, 1 Ves. 19; *Gordon v. Gordon*, 3 Swanston, 463, 467, 471, 474, 477; *Cann v. Cann*, 1 P. Will. 723; 1 Ves. & B. 30; *Naylor v. Winch*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 564, 565; *Leonard*

§ 125. The case of *Lansdowne v. Lansdowne*¹ was to the following effect. The plaintiff, who was heir-at-law, and son of the eldest brother, had a controversy with his uncle (who was the youngest brother), whether he or his uncle was heir to the estate of another deceased brother of his uncle; and they consulted one Hughes, who was a schoolmaster and their neighbor, and he gave it as his opinion, upon examining the Clerk's Remembrancer, that the uncle had the right, because lands could not ascend; upon which the plaintiff and his uncle agreed to divide the lands between them, and in pursuance of this agreement they executed, first a bond, and then conveyances of the shares fixed on for each. The plaintiff sought to be relieved against these instruments, alleging in his bill that he had been surprised and imposed upon by Hughes and his uncle. The uncle being dead, his son and Hughes were made defendants to the bill; and Hughes, in his answer, admitted, that he had given the opinion, being misled by the book, and that he had recommended the parties to take further advice; but that the plaintiff had afterwards told him, that, if his uncle would, he would agree to share the land between them, let it be whose right it would, and thereby prevent all disputes and lawsuits. Upon which

v. Leonard, 2 B. & Beatt. 171, 180, 182. The case of *Corking v. Pratt*, 1 Ves. 400, and *Belt's Supplement*, 176, seems to have turned upon a mistake, not of law, but of fact. But, then, it does not appear, that, at the time, either party knew what the personal estate would ultimately amount to, and it might have been a matter of great doubt, and a compromise accordingly made. If so, could it be afterwards set aside? (See *Burt v. Barlow*, 3 Bro. Ch. 451; *Leonard v. Leonard*, 2 B. & Beatt. 171, 180.) If the case turned upon the ground of a suppression of facts, known to the mother and not to the daughter, or upon undue influence or imposition, there could be little difficulty in supporting it. The case of *Ramsden v. Hylton* (2 Ves. 304; *Belt's Supplement* 350) turned upon other considerations. How can the case of *Bingham v. Bingham*, as a case standing upon general principles, be reconciled with *Mildmay v. Hungerford* (2 Vern. 243), and *Pullen v. Ready* (2 Atk. 587, 591)? Lord Cottenham, in *Stewart v. Stewart*, 6 Clark & Fennell. 968, said: "*Bingham v. Bingham* was not a case of compromise, but of a sale, by the defendant to the plaintiff, of an estate which was already his; and a return of the purchase-money was decreed at the Rolls, upon the ground of mistake. That case, therefore, does not bear directly upon the present. If it were necessary to consider the principle of that decree, it might not be easy to distinguish that case from any other purchase, in which the vendor turns out to have had no title. In both there is a mistake, and the effect of it in both is, that the vendor receives, and the purchaser pays money without the intended equivalent." See also *Evans v. Llewellyn*, 2 Bro. Ch. 160.

¹ *Moseley*, 364; s. c. 2 Jac. & Walk. 205.

Hughes prepared the papers, and they were executed accordingly. Lord Chancellor King decreed, that it appeared, that the bond and conveyances "were obtained by mistake, and misrepresentation of the law," and ordered them to be given up to be cancelled. It is upon this occasion that his lordship is reported to have used the language already quoted, that the maxim, that ignorance of the law was no excuse, did not apply to civil cases; but if his judgment proceeded upon that ground, it was (as has been already stated) manifestly erroneous. This case has been questioned on several occasions, and is certainly open to much criticism. It appears to have been a case of a family dispute and compromise, made by parties equally innocent, and upon a doubted question of title under a mutual mistake of the law. Under such circumstances, there is great difficulty in sustaining it in point of principle or authority. It was most probably decided by Lord King on the untenable ground already suggested. If, indeed, it proceeded upon the ground of undue confidence in Hughes's opinion, or was induced by his undue persuasions and influence, such a misrepresentation of the law by him might, under such circumstances, furnish a reason for relief.¹ But that does not appear in any report of the case.²

¹ See *Fitzgerald v. Peck*, 4 Littell, 127.

² The case of *Lansdowne v. Lansdowne* has been doubted on several occasions. The report in 2 Jac. & Walk. 205, is more full than that in *Moseley*, though to the same effect. The decree was, that the agreement "was obtained by a mistake and misrepresentation of the law," which, under certain circumstances, might furnish a ground for relief. The case was closely criticised and doubted by the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 8 Wheaton, 214, 215, and 1 Peters, Sup. Ct. 15, 16. The court seemed to think it might be explicable, upon the ground that the plaintiff was ignorant of the fact that he was the eldest son; or if he mistook his legal rights, that he was imposed upon by some unfair representations of his better-informed opponent; or, that his ignorance of the law of primogeniture demonstrated such mental imbecility as would entitle him to relief. There is an apparent error in the suggestion of the Supreme Court, that there was an award in the case. Hughes did not act as an arbitrator, but was merely consulted as a friend. If there had been a plain mistake of the law by an arbitrator, that would of itself in many cases have been a ground of relief. *Corneforth v. Geer*, 2 Vern. 705; *Ridout v. Pain*, 3 Atk. 494. Mr. Powell (on Contracts, vol. 2, p. 196) puts the case of *Lansdowne v. Lansdowne* as an illustration of a mistake of a fact, that is, of heirship. In *Stewart v. Stewart*, 6 Clark & Finnell. 966, Lord Cottenham made the following remarks: "Lansdowne v. Lansdowne is a very strong case of setting aside a compromise, and a conveyance in pursuance of it; but it is impossible to ascertain the facts.

§ 126. The distinction between cases of mistake of a plain and settled principle of law, and cases of mistake of a principle of

It appears that fraud was alleged against the younger brother; and Hughes, who had advised upon the rights of the two, was made a defendant, which could only have been done upon an imputation of fraud, and in Moseley's Report it is said, that the lord chancellor's decree proceeded upon the ground of mistake and misrepresentation. But Mr. Jacob's extract from the Registrar's Book is no doubt correct in stating the ground to be 'misrepresentation of the law.' It is, however, to be observed, that in Moseley the eldest son is reported to have said that he would rather divide the estate than go to law, though he had the right; and that the court is represented to have said, that the maxim ignorantia juris non excusat did not hold in civil cases, which, it will be seen, has not been a doctrine recognized in modern cases. He afterwards added: "Bilbie v. Lumley is directly opposed to the doctrine upon which Lansdowne v. Lansdowne is stated in Moseley to have been decided; for it was held, that 'money paid by one with full knowledge (or the means of such knowledge in his hands) of all the circumstances, cannot be recovered back again on account of such payment having been made under an ignorance of the law.'" *Stewart v. Stewart*, 6 Clark & Finnell. 969. See also *Adams v. Winne*, 7 Paige, Ch. 99; *Hall v. Reed*, 2 Barb. Ch. 500; *Webb v. Rice*, 6 Hill, 219; *Gilbert v. Gilbert*, 9 Barb. 534. [*The exact opinion of Chancellor Walworth, upon this much vexed question, is perhaps more definitely expressed in *Crosier v. Acer*, 7 Paige, 137, 143. "If this court can relieve against a mistake in law, in any case where the defendant has been guilty of no fraud, or unfair practice, which is at least very doubtful, it must be in a case in which the defendant has in reality lost nothing whatever by the mistake, and where the parties can be restored, substantially, to the same situation in which they were at the time the mistake happened." This indicates a reluctance to declare that all cases of injustice, produced by the mere mistake of law, are remediless in a court of equity. The language of Chief Justice Marshall, in concluding one of his most studied and elaborate opinions, in *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 8 Wheaton, 174, 217, indicates very fully the same feeling. "We find no case which we think precisely in point; and are unwilling, where the effect of the instrument is acknowledged to have been entirely misunderstood by both parties, to say that a court of equity is incapable of affording relief." And Mr. Justice Washington, in the final decision of this case, 1 Peters, 1, 16, where the relief is denied, upon the ground mainly of the intervening equity in favor of the general creditors, in consequence of the decease of the debtor, and the consequent impracticability of placing the parties in a similar position to what they would have been in, had the mistake been corrected at the time it occurred, thus concludes: "It is not the intention of the court, in the case now under consideration, to lay it down, that there may not be cases in which a court of equity will relieve against a plain mistake arising from ignorance of law. But we do mean to say that where the parties, upon deliberation and advice, reject one species of security, and agree to another, under a misapprehension of the law, as to the nature of the security so substituted, a court of equity will not, on the ground of such misapprehension, and the insufficiency of such security, in consequence of a subsequent event, not foreseen, perhaps, or thought of, direct a new security, of a

law, not plain to persons generally, but which is yet constructively certain, as a foundation of title, is not of itself very intelligible, or, practically speaking, very easy of application, considered as an independent element of decision. In contemplation of law, all its rules and principles are deemed certain, although they have not, as yet, been recognized by public adjudications. This doctrine proceeds upon the theoretical ground, that *Id certum est, quod certum reddi potest*; and that decisions do not make the law, but only promulgate it. Besides; what are to be deemed plain and settled principles? Are they such as have been long and uniformly established by adjudications only? Or is a single decision sufficient? What degree of clearness constitutes the line of demarcation? If there have been decisions different ways at different times, which is to prevail?¹ If a majority of the profession hold one doctrine, and a minority another, is the rule to be deemed doubtful, or is it to be deemed certain?

different character, to be given, or decree that to be done which the parties supposed would have been effected by the instrument which was finally agreed upon."

In another part of this very able opinion, it is said, the general rule is, that courts of equity will not grant relief, sought upon the sole ground of mistake of law. "And whatever exceptions there may be to this rule, they are not only few in number, but they will be found to have something peculiar in their characters." This latter doctrine is again reaffirmed, by Mr. Justice Catron, in precisely the same terms above used by Justice Washington, in *Bank of the United States v. Daniel*, 12 Peters, 32, 55. And in *Wheeler v. Smith*, 9 How. U. S. 55, relief was granted, where a release from the heir-at-law to the executor was made under a mistake of the law, and some undue influence; but this latter was rather implied than express.

We think, therefore, that it can scarcely be said, in fairness, that the United States Court of last resort has recognized more than the general rule that mistakes of law are not ground of equitable relief, with the distinct declaration, that there are certain well recognized, but peculiar cases, forming exceptions to this rule. See *post*, § 137 and note; § 138 *a*, *et seq.*]

¹ There is much masculine force in the reasoning of Mr. Chancellor Kent, on this subject, in *Lyon v. Richmond*, 2 Johns. Ch. 60. "The court (says he) do not undertake to relieve parties from their acts and deeds fairly done, though under a mistake of the law. Every man is to be charged, at his peril, with a knowledge of the law. There is no other principle which is safe and practicable in the common intercourse of mankind. And to suffer a subsequent judicial decision, in any one given case on a point of law, to open or annul every thing that has been done in other cases of the like kind, for years before, under a different understanding of the law, would lead to the most mischievous consequences."

§ 127. Take the case commonly put on this head, of the construction of a will. Every person is presumed to know the law; and though opinions may differ upon the construction of the will before an adjudication is made; yet, when it is made, it is supposed always to have been certain. It may have been a question at the bar, whether a devise was an estate for life, or in tail, or in fee-simple. But when the court has once decided it to be the one or the other, the title is always supposed to have been fixed and certain in the party from the beginning. It will furnish a sufficient title to maintain a bill for the specific performance of a contract of sale of that title.

§ 128. Where there is a plain and established doctrine on the subject, so generally known, and of such constant occurrence, as to be understood by the community at large as a rule of property, such as the common canons of descent; there, a mistake in ignorance of the law, and of title founded on it, may well give rise to a presumption, that there has been some undue influence, imposition, mental imbecility, surprise, or confidence abused. But in such cases the mistake of the law is not the foundation of the relief; but it is the medium of proof to establish some other proper ground of relief.

§ 129. Lord Eldon, in a case of a family agreement, seems to have thought, that there might be a distinction between cases, where there is a doubt raised between the parties as to their rights, and a compromise is made upon the footing of that doubt, and cases, where the parties act upon a supposition of right in one of the parties without a doubt upon it, under a mistake of law. The former might be held obligatory, when the latter ought not to be.¹ But his lordship admitted that the doctrine attributed to Lord Macclesfield was otherwise, denying the distinction, and giving equal validity to agreements entered into upon a supposition of a right, and of a doubtful right.² It may be gathered, however, from

¹ *Stockley v. Stockley*, 1 V. & Beames, 31.

² *Ibid.* *Cann v. Cann*, 1 P. Will. 727; *Stapilton v. Stapilton*, 1 Atk. 10. Lord Eldon was here speaking in the case of a family agreement, and not between strangers; but it is by no means certain, that he meant to limit his observations to such cases. In *Dunnage v. White*, 1 Swanst. 137, 151, Sir Thomas Plumer said: "It is, then, insisted, that the deed may be supported as a family arrangement, according to the doctrine of *Stapilton v. Stapilton*, and *Cann v. Cann*. Undoubtedly, parties, entitled in different events, may, while the uncertainty exists, each, taking his chance, effect a valid compromise. In *Stapilton v. Sta-*

these remarks, that Lord Eldon's own opinion was, that an agreement made or act done, not upon a doubt of title, but upon ignorance of any title in the party, ought not to be obligatory upon him, although arising solely from a mistake of law.

§ 130. There may be a solid ground for a distinction between cases, where a party acts or agrees in ignorance of any title in him, or upon the supposition of a clear title in another, and cases where there is a doubt or controversy or litigation between parties as to their respective rights.¹ In the former cases (as has been already

pilton, the legitimacy of the eldest son was doubtful. That was a question proper to be so settled; and the settlement was a consideration, which gave effect to the deed." In *Stewart v. Stewart*, 6 Clark & Finnell. 967, Lord Cottenham used the following language: "In *Stapilton v. Stapilton*, Henry the eldest son, being illegitimate, Philip, the second son, received no consideration for the arrangement by which the estates of which Philip was tenant in tail, subject to his father's life, were divided between them; but Lord Hardwicke, approving the doctrine of Lord Macclesfield in *Cann v. Cann*, said, 'that an agreement entered into upon a supposition of a right or of a doubtful right, though it after comes out that the right was on the other side, shall be binding, and the right shall not prevail against the agreement of parties; for the right must always be on the one side or the other, and therefore the compromise of a doubtful right is a sufficient foundation for an agreement'; and he therefore maintained the arrangement, and decreed a performance of what remained to be done to carry it into effect." See also *Bellamy v. Sabine*, 2 Phillips, Ch. 425; *Hotchkin v. Dickson*, 2 Bligh, 348.

¹ In *Evans v. Llewellyn* (2 Bro. Ch. 150; s. c. 1 Cox, 333), the master of the rolls (Lord Kenyon) did not seem to recognize any such distinction. The decree in that case seems to have been put upon the mere ground of surprise. But from Mr. Cox's Report, it would seem that the party was not ignorant of the facts, or even of the law of his title. Mr. Brown represents the case a little differently. In *Lang v. The Bank of the United States*, Mr. Chief Justice Shippen, speaking of the effect of a mistake of right of a party, and that he was not barred by it, said: "The case of *Penn v. Lord Baltimore* is decisive to this point. I was present at the argument half a century ago, and heard Lord Hardwicke say, though it is not mentioned in the Report, that, if Lord Baltimore had made the agreement in question, under a mistake of his right to another degree of latitude, he ought to be relieved; but that he was not mistaken." The cases of *Ramsden v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 304, and *Farewell v. Coker*, cited 2 Meriv. 269, were upon mistakes of fact, not of law; or rather attempts were there made to extend the releases to property never intended by the parties. In *Neale v. Neale*, 1 Keen, 672, 683, A. and B. having an apparent title to copyhold lands as tenants in common in fee under the will of their father, entered into a parol agreement to make partition of the devised lands, and divided them accordingly; A., the elder brother, taking the larger share, a doubt being entertained whether their father had a right to devise the lands. A. was, in fact, at the time of the

suggested) the party seems to labor in some sort under a mistake of fact, as well as of law.¹ He supposes, as a matter of fact, that he has no title, and that the other party has a title to the property. He does not intend to release or surrender his title, but the act or agreement proceeds upon the supposition that he has none. Lord Macclesfield, in the very case in which the language already cited,² is attributed to him, is reported to have said, that if the party releasing is ignorant of his right to the estate, or if his right is concealed from him by the person to whom the release is made, there would be good reasons for setting aside the release.³ But (he added) the mere fact that the party making the release had the right, and was controverting it with the other party, can furnish no ground to set aside the release; for, by the same reason, there could be no such thing as compromising a suit, nor room for any accommodation. Every release supposes the party making it to have a right.⁴

agreement, tenant in tail under the limitation, under a surrender made by his grandfather. After A.'s death, B., having discovered his own title as tenant in tail, repudiated the agreement, and brought an ejectment to recover the whole estate. On a bill, filed by the devisee of A., the court, upon the ground on which it supports family arrangements, supported the partition, and decreed B. to do all necessary acts to bar the entail.

¹ *Ante*, § 129. And see 2 Powell on Contracts, p. 196; *Dunnage v. White*, 1 Swanst. 137, 151; *Harvey v. Cooke*, 4 Russell, 34. [* The idea of there existing in this class of cases a mistake of fact, as well as of law, might perhaps with equal force apply to all cases of mistake of law. The true state of the law is always a fact. It is so treated in regard to the law of a foreign country, which is required to be proved like any other fact. And a mistake in regard to the law of a foreign state is treated, in courts of equity, like any other mistake of fact, as proper ground of relief. *Post*, § 140, and note. And the domestic law is no less a fact than the foreign law. But in regard to the law of the place of the forum, both the court and the parties are presumed to know it, and are bound to take notice of it. It is rather upon this ground, we apprehend, that courts of equity decline to interfere and grant relief upon the basis of alleged mistakes of the law of the forum, than because there is any inherent difference between a *bond fide* misapprehension of law and of fact, or between the mistake of the law of the forum, and of that of a foreign state. So the mistake of one's title, when that depends upon a pure question of law, is a mistake of law, and nothing else. But it is very obvious that the distinction between mistakes of law, and of fact, so far as equitable relief is concerned, is one of policy rather than of principle.]

² *Ante*, § 122.

³ *Cann v. Cann*, 1 P. Will. 727; *Ramsden v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 304.

⁴ 1 P. Will. 727. In *Leonard v. Leonard* (2 B. & Beatt. 180), Lord Man-

§ 131. The whole doctrine of the validity of compromises of doubtful rights rests on this foundation.¹ If such compromises are otherwise unobjectionable, they will be binding, and the right will not prevail against the agreement of the parties; for the right must always be on one side or the other, and there would be an end of compromises, if they might be overthrown upon any subsequent ascertainment of rights contrary thereto.² If, therefore, a compromise of doubtful right is fairly made between parties, its validity cannot depend upon any future adjudication of that right.³ And where compromises of this sort are fairly entered into, whether the uncertainty rests upon a doubt of fact, or a doubt in point of law, if both parties are in the same ignorance, the compromise is equally binding, and cannot be affected by any subsequent investigation and result.⁴ But if the parties are not mutually ignorant, the case admits of a very different consideration, whether the ignorance be of a matter of fact or of law.⁵ It has been emphatically

ners takes notice of a distinction between a mere release and a deed of compromise. The former supposes that the parties know their rights, and that one surrenders his rights to the other; in the latter, that both parties are ignorant of their rights, and the agreement is founded in that ignorance, and that the party surrendering may in truth have nothing to surrender. But is it true, in all cases, that a release presupposes a right? Lord Redesdale has said, that the accepting of a release is in no case an acknowledgment that a right existed in the releasor. It amounts only to this: I give you so much for not seeking to disturb me. *Underwood v. Lord Courtown*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 67.

¹ See the dictum of Lord Hardwicke, in *Brown v. Pring*, 1 Ves. 407, 408, as to compromises made by parties, with their eyes open, and rightly informed.

² *Cann v. Cann*, 1 P. Will. 727; *Stapilton v. Stapilton*, 1 Atk. 10; *Stockley v. Stockley*, 1 V. & B. 29, 31; *Naylor v. Winch*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 555; *Goodman v. Sayers*, 2 Jac. & Walk. 263; *Pickering v. Pickering*, 2 Beavan, 31, 56.

³ *Leonard v. Leonard*, 2 Ball & Beatt. 179, 180; *Shotwell v. Murray*, 1 Johns. Ch. 516; *Lyon v. Lyon*, 2 Johns. Ch. 51; *Dunnage v. White*, 1 Swanst. 151, 152; *Harvey v. Cooke*, 4 Russell, 34; *Stewart v. Stewart*, 6 Clark & Finnell. 969.

⁴ *Leonard v. Leonard*, 2 Ball & Beatt. 179, 180. See *Gordon v. Gordon*, 3 Swanst. 470; *Pickering v. Pickering*, 2 Beavan, 31, 56; *Gossmour v. Pigge*, *The (English) Jurist*, June 22, 1844, p. 526.

⁵ *Id.* 180, 182; *Gordon v. Gordon*, 3 Swanst. 400, 467, 470, 473, 476; *Stewart v. Stewart*, 6 Clark & Finnell. 969. See, also, a case cited by Lord Thurlow, in *Mortimer v. Capper*, 1 Bro. Ch. 158. In respect to compromises, it is often laid down that they must be reasonable (*Stapilton v. Stapilton*, 1 Atk. 10). By this we are not to understand that the consideration is adequate, and there is no great inequality; but that the circumstances are such as to demonstrate that no undue advantage was taken by either party of the other. Thus, in a case of

said, that no man can doubt that the court of chancery will never hold parties, acting upon their rights, to be bound, unless they act with full knowledge of all the doubts and difficulties that do arise. But if parties will, with full knowledge, act upon them, though it turns out that one gains an advantage from a mistake in point of law, yet if the agreement was reasonable and fair at the time, it shall be binding.¹ And transactions are not, in the eye of a court of equity, to be treated as binding even as family arrangements, where the doubts existing, as to the rights alleged to be compromised, are not presented to the mind of the party interested.²

[* 131 a. Courts of equity are disposed to favor the compromise of contested claims. In a late case before the master of the rolls, the learned judge said: "I beg to express my conviction that the

compromise of doubtful rights under a will, the master of the rolls (Sir R. P. Arden) said: "It (the agreement) must be reasonable. No man can doubt that this court will never hold parties acting upon their rights, doubts arising as to those rights, to be bound, unless they act with a full knowledge of all the doubts and difficulties that arise. But if parties will, with full knowledge of them, act upon them, though it turns out that one gains a great advantage, if the agreement was fair and reasonable at the time, it shall be binding. There was a case before the Lord Chancellor, who spoke to me upon it, in which it was held that the court will enforce such an agreement, though it turns out that the parties were mistaken in point of law, *even supposing counsel's opinion was wrong*. *Gibbons v. Caunt*, 4 Ves. 849. See *Stapilton v. Stapilton*, 2 Atk. 10; *Naylor v. Winch*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 555; *Neale v. Neale*, 1 Keen, 672, 683; *Stewart v. Stewart*, 6 Clark & Finnell. 969.

¹ *Gibbons v. Caunt*, 4 Ves. 849. See also *Dunnage v. White*, 1 Swanst. 137. See *Stewart v. Stewart*, 6 Clark & Finnell. 969; *Pickering v. Pickering*, 2 Beavan. 31, 56. In this case Lord Langdale said: "When parties, whose rights are questionable, have equal knowledge of facts and equal means of ascertaining what their rights really are, and they fairly endeavor to settle their respective claims among themselves, every court must feel disposed to support the conclusions or agreements to which they may fairly come at the time; and that, notwithstanding the subsequent discovery of some common error; and if in this case the parties had been on equal terms, the agreement might have been supported. But the parties were not on equal terms; and, moreover, I am of opinion that, under the circumstances, it was the duty of the defendant to see that the nature of the transaction was fully explained to his mother, and to see that she was placed in a situation to have the question properly considered on her behalf; and whatever may have been his intention in this respect (for I do not think it necessary to impute to him an intentional fraud throughout the transaction), I am of opinion that he did not perform this duty; and on the whole it appears to me, that he is not entitled to the benefit of the settled account, and that the agreement must be set aside."

² *Henley v. Cooke*, 4 Russell, 34. [* See also *Hurlburt v. Phelps*, 30 Conn. 42.]

attorney-general has full and ample powers, whenever he thinks that a proposal of the defendant to arrange the matters in dispute, though it does not concede the utmost the charity is entitled to, will on the whole be more beneficial to the charity than a long and contested litigation, to accept it, and carry that proposal into effect; and if the matter were brought before the court, it would pay that respect to his opinion, which it has always been its custom to pay, and sanction the arrangement.¹ This salutary rule would undoubtedly be applied to all compromises, effected in suits respecting charities, through the agency of its properly constituted trustees. But trustees are not justified in making doubtful compromises of the interests of their *cestuis que trust*, as by consenting to a fiat in bankruptcy being annulled.² But courts of equity will often grant specific performance of an agreement to compromise a suit upon certain terms, the balance being ascertained, but it is not the general practice.³ And where a compromise was made under a misapprehension of facts, and was of recent date, it was set aside, the matter being regarded as still *sub judice*.⁴

§ 132. There are cases of family compromises, where, upon principles of policy, for the honor or peace of families, the doctrine sustaining compromises has been carried further. And it has been truly remarked, that in such family arrangements the court of chancery has administered an equity, which is not applied to agreements generally.⁵ [But to render even such compromises binding, it was said in a late case, that there must be an honest disclosure, by each party to the other, of all such material facts known to him, relative to the rights and title of either, as are calculated to influence the judgment in the adoption of the compromise; and any advantage taken by either party of the other's known ignorance of such facts will render the same void in equity and liable to be set aside.⁶] Such compromises, fairly and reasonably made, to save the honor of a family, as in case of suspected

¹ [* Attorney General v. Boucherett, 25 Beavan, 116, 121.

² Wiles v. Gresham, 5 De G., M. & G. 770.

³ Dawson v. Newsome, 6 Jur. n. s. 625.

⁴ Stainton v. The Carron Company, 6 Jur. n. s. 360; s. c. affirmed in House of Lords, 10 Jur. n. s. 783.]

⁵ Stockley v. Stockley, 1 V. & Beames, 29; Bellamy v. Sabine, 2 Phillips's Ch. 425.

⁶ Smith v. Pincombe, 10 Eng. Law & Eq. 50. And see Groves v. Perkins, 6 Sim. 576.

illegitimacy, to prevent family disputes and family forfeitures, are upheld with a strong hand ; and are binding, when in cases between mere strangers the like agreements would not be enforced.¹ Thus, it has been said, that if, on the death of a person, seised in fee, a dispute arises, who is heir ; and there is room for a rational doubt, as to that fact, and the parties deal with each other openly and fairly, investigating the subject for themselves, and each communicating to the other all that he knows, and is informed of, and at length they agree to distribute the property, under the notion that the elder claimant is illegitimate, although it turns out afterwards that he is legitimate ; there, the court will not disturb such an arrangement, merely because the fact of legitimacy is subsequently established.² Yet, in such a case, the party acts under a mistake of fact. In cases of ignorance of title, upon a plain mistake of the law, there seems little room to distinguish between family compromises and others.

§ 132 a. Thus, where a father being heir presumptive to A. B., who was then supposed to be a lunatic, and being under an apprehension that unfair means might be resorted to, in the then state of mind of A. B., to deprive the family of the succession to the estate, agreed with his eldest son that the son should sue out a commission of lunacy against A. B., and carry on such other suits and law proceedings as should be necessary, in the name of the father, at the expense of the son ; in consideration of which agreement, and natural love and affection, the father covenanted that after the death of A. B., the estates, which should thereupon descend to him, should be conveyed to himself for life, remainder to his son for life, with remainder to his first and other sons in tail male. The son, at his own expense, and in the name of his father,

¹ *Stapilton v. Stapilton*, 1 Atk. 10 ; *Cann v. Cann*, 1 P. Will. 727 ; *Stockley v. Stockley*, 1 V. & Beames, 30, 31 ; *Persse v. Persse*, 1 West, in House of Lords, 110 ; *Cory v. Cory*, 1 Ves. 19 ; *Heap v. Tonge*, 7 Eng. Law & Eq. 189 ; *Leonard v. Leonard*, 2 B. & Beatt. 171, 180 ; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 7, note (v) ; *Gordon v. Gordon*, 3 Swanst. 463, 470, 473, 476 ; *Dunnage v. White*, 1 Swanst. 137, 151 ; *Harvey v. Cooke*, 4 Russell, 34. *Jodvell v. Jodvell*, 9 Beavan, 45 ; *Frank v. Frank* (1 Ch. Cas. 84) is generally supposed to have been decided upon this head. But it was apparently a case of misrepresentation ; and Lord Manners has doubted its authority. *Leonard v. Leonard*, 2 B. & Beatt. 182, 183. *Cory v. Cory*, 1 Ves. 19, is very difficult to maintain ; for the party was drunk at the time of the agreement.

² *Gordon v. Gordon*, 3 Swanst. 476 ; id. 463.

sued out the commission, under which A. B. was found a lunatic who soon afterwards died; whereupon the father succeeded as heir to the lunatic's estate. Upon a bill filed by the son to carry into effect this agreement, a specific performance was decreed; and it was held, that the agreement was not voluntary, void for champerty or maintenance, or illegal, either for want of mutuality, or as being a fraud upon the great seal in lunacy; and considering the ages and situations of the parties, the father being sixty-two and the lunatic forty, and the objects to be gained by the prosecution of the commission of lunacy, that the consideration for the deed was not inadequate; but that deeds for carrying into effect family arrangements are exempt from the rules, which affect other deeds, the consideration being composed partly of value and partly of love and affection.¹

§ 133. And where there is a mixture of mistake of title, gross personal ignorance, liability to imposition, habitual intoxication, and want of professional advice, there has been manifested a strong disinclination of courts of equity to sustain even family settlements. It was upon this sort of mixed ground that it was held, in a recent case, that a deed executed by the members of a family to determine their interests under the will and partial intestacy of an ancestor, ought not to be enforced. It appeared on the face of the deed, that the parties did not understand their rights, or the nature of the transaction; and that the heir surrendered an unimpeachable title without consideration. Evidence was also given of his gross ignorance, habitual intoxication, and want of professional advice. But there was no sufficient proof of fraud or undue influence; and there had been an acquiescence of five years.²

§ 134. Cases of surprise, mixed up with a mistake of law, stand upon a ground peculiar to themselves, and independent of the general doctrine. In such cases the agreements or acts are unadvised, and improvident, and without due deliberation; and, therefore, they are held invalid, upon the common principle adopted by courts of equity, to protect those who are unable to protect themselves, and of whom an undue advantage is taken.³

¹ *Persse v. Persse*, 1 West, Rep. in House of Lords, p. 110; s. c. 7 Clark & Finnell. 279.

² *Dunnage v. White*, 1 Swanst. 137.

³ See *Evans v. Llewellyn*, 1 Cox, 333; s. c. 2 Bro. Ch. 150; *Marquis of Townshend v. Strangroom*, 6 Ves. 333, 338; *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 155, 156; *Ormond v. Hutchinson*, 13 Ves. 51.

Where the surprise is mutual, there is of course a still stronger ground to interfere; for neither party has intended what has been done. They have misunderstood the effect of their own agreements or acts; or have presupposed some facts or rights existing, as the basis of their proceedings, which in truth did not exist. Contracts made in mutual error, under circumstances material to their character and consequences, seem, upon general principles, invalid.¹ *Non videntur, qui errant, consentire*, is a rule of the civil law;² and it is founded in common sense and common justice. But in its application it is material to distinguish between error in circumstances which do not influence the contract, and error in circumstances which induce the contract.³

[* § 134 a. There is a very striking case⁴ coming under the head of mutual mistake, where the vendor of land, in pointing out to the purchaser the boundaries of the land which he proposed to sell, innocently represented it as being in a different place from that in which it in fact was; and as being of a different quality and value from the truth, and the court set aside the purchase, made upon the faith of such misrepresentations, although not fraudulently made. And it seems to us a case resting upon most unquestionable principles of equity law. It was considered that the purchaser was guilty of no culpable neglect in trusting to the representations of the vendor, as to the identity of the land forming the subject-matter of the contract, and that the vendor was in fault in assuming to point out the land without

¹ *Willan v. Willan*, 16 Ves. 72, 81; *Cowes v. Higginson*, 1 Ves. & Beames, 524, 527; *Ramsden v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 304; *Farewell v. Coker*, 2 Meriv. 269.

² Dig. Lib. 50, tit. 17, l. 116, § 2.

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 7, note (t); id. note (x). Mr. Fonblanque has remarked, that the effect of error in contracts is very well treated by Pothier, in his *Treatise on Obligations*, Pt. 1, ch. 1, art. 3, § 1, 16. See also 1 Domat, Civil Law, B. 1, tit. 1, § 5, n. 10; id. tit. 18, § 2; and *ante*, § 111, note 2.

[* ⁴ *Spurr v. Benedict*, 99 Mass. 463; s. p. *Watts v. Cummins*, 59 Penn. St. 84. But the case of *White v. Williams*, 47 Barbour, 222, one judge dissenting, seems to favor the opposite view. But the party to a written contract, where one condition is purposely omitted, trusting to the oral assurance of the other party to perform it, cannot ask to have the contract reformed by inserting that condition, there being neither fraud, accident, or mistake. *Andrew v. Spurr*, 8 Allen, 412. But the silence of the execution debtor, at a sheriff's sale, he knowing that the purchaser is acting under a misapprehension, will not afford any ground of relief in equity. *Butcher v. Buchana*, 17 Iowa, 81. See also *Oder v. Gard*, 23 Ind. 212.]

assuring himself of the certainty of his information upon the subject in a particular so fundamental to the sale or purchase. And the vendee having offered to surrender his deed immediately upon discovering the mistake, was justly entitled to be relieved from the performance of the contract.]

§ 135. There are also cases of peculiar trust, and confidence and relation, between the parties, which give rise to a qualification of the general doctrine. Thus, where a mortgagor had mortgaged an estate to a mortgagee, who was his attorney, and in settling an account with the latter, he had allowed him a poundage for having received the rents of the estate, in ignorance of the law, that a mortgagee was not entitled to such an allowance, which was professionally known to the attorney; it was held that the allowance should be set aside. But the master of the rolls, upon that occasion, put the case upon the peculiar relation between the parties; and the duty of the attorney to have made known the law to his client, the mortgagor. He said that he did not enter into the distinction between allowances in accounts from ignorance of law and allowances from ignorance of fact; that he did not mean to say that ignorance of law will generally open an account. But that, the parties standing in this relation to each other, he would not hold the mortgagor, acting in ignorance of his rights, to have given a binding assent.¹

§ 136. There are, also, some other cases in which relief has been granted in equity, apparently upon the ground of mistake of law. But they will be found, upon examination, rather to be cases of defective execution of the intent of the parties from ignorance of law, as to the proper mode of framing the instrument. Thus, where a husband, upon his marriage, entered into a bond to his wife, without the intervention of trustees, to leave her a sum of money if she should survive him; the bond, although released by the marriage, was held good as an agreement in equity entitling the wife to satisfaction out of the husband's assets.² Also, *e contra*, where a wife before marriage executed a bond to her husband, to convey all her lands to him in fee; it was upheld in favor of the husband, after the marriage, as an agreement defectively executed, to secure to the husband the land as her portion.

¹ Langstaffe v. Fenwick, 10 Ves. 405, 406.

² Acton v. Pearce, 2 Vern. 480; s. c. Prec. Ch. 237.

³ Cannel v. Buckle, 2 P. Will. 243; Newl. on Contr. ch. 19, p. 345, 346; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7.

§ 137. We have thus gone over the principal cases, which are supposed to contain contradictions of, or exceptions to, the general rule, that ignorance of the law, with a full knowledge of the facts, furnishes no ground to rescind agreements or to set aside solemn acts of the parties. Without undertaking to assert that there are none of these cases which are inconsistent with the rule, it may be affirmed that the real exceptions to it are very few, and generally stand upon some very urgent pressure of circumstances.¹ The rule prevails in England in all cases of compromises of doubtful, and perhaps in all cases of doubted rights; and especially in all cases of family arrangements.² It is relaxed in cases where there is a total ignorance of title, founded in the mistake of a plain and settled principle of law, and in cases of imposition, misrepresentation, undue influence, misplaced confidence, and surprise.³ In

¹ See Edén on Injunct. ch. 2, p. 8, 9, 10, and note (b). *The State v. Paup.* 13 Ark. 135.

² *Stewart v. Stewart*, 6 Clark & Finnell. 911, 966 to 971; *Pickering v. Pickering*, 2 Beavan, 31, 56.

³ *Stewart v. Stewart*, 6 Clark & Finnell. 911, 966 to 971. The English elementary writers on this subject treat it in a very loose and unsatisfactory manner, laying down no distinct rules when mistakes of the law are, or are not, relievable in equity; but contenting themselves, for the most part, with mere statements of the case. Thus, Mr. Maddock, after saying that a mistake of parties as to the law is not a ground for reforming a deed, founded on such mistake, and that it has been doubted whether ignorance of law will entitle a party to open an account, proceeds to add, that there are several cases in which a party has been relieved from the consequences of acts, founded on ignorance of the law. He afterwards states that, in general, agreements relating to real or personal estate, if founded on mistake (not saying whether of law or fact), will, for that reason, be set aside. 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 60, 61, 62. Mr. Jeremy says, "That *ignorantia juris non excusat*, ignorance of the law will not excuse, is a maxim respected in equity as well as at law." "A knowledge of the law is consequently presumed, and therefore no mutual explanation of it is *primâ facie* required between the parties to a compact. If one of them should in truth be ignorant of a matter of law, involved in the transaction, and the other should know him to be so and should take advantage of the circumstance, he would, it is conceived, be guilty of a fraud [see *Cooke v. Nathan*, 16 Barbour, 344]; and although, if both should be ignorant thereof, it would be what is technically called a case of surprise, it does not appear that this court will, in any other case interfere upon a mistake of law." Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. 366. Mr. Fonblanque has collected many of the cases in his valuable notes; but he has not attempted to expound the true principles on which they turn, or the reason of the differences. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 7, note (v). Mr. Cooper (Eq. Plead. p. 140) disposes of the whole subject with the single remark: "On the ground of mistake or misconception of

America, the general rule has been recognized, as founded in sound wisdom and policy, and fit to be upheld with a steady confidence. And, hitherto, the exceptions to it (if any) will be found not to rest upon the mere foundation of a naked mistake of law, however plain and settled the principle may be, nor upon mere ignorance of title founded upon such mistake.¹

parties, courts of equity have also frequently interfered in a variety of cases." Lord Redesdale leaves it in the same unsatisfactory manner. Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, p. 129 (edit. 1827). Mr. Newland (on Contracts in Equity, ch. 28, p. 432) says: "Cases of plain mistake or misapprehension, though not the effect of fraud or contrivance, are entitled to the interference of the court" (without making any distinction as to law or fact), and he cites *Turner v. Turner*, 2 Ch. 81; *Bingham v. Bingham*, 1 Ves. 126; and *Lansdowne v. Lansdowne*, Moseley, 364. He then adds, that it is different in compromises of doubtful rights. Lord Hardwicke is reported to have said, in *Langley v. Brown*, 2 Atk. 202, "That [if] a person puts a groundless and unguarded confidence in another [it] is not a foundation in a court of equity to set aside a deed." This is true in the abstract. But groundless and unguarded confidence often constitutes, with other circumstances, a most material ingredient for relief.

¹ The general rule is affirmed in *Shotwell v. Murray*, 1 Johns. Ch. 512, 515, and *Lyon v. Richmond*, 2 Johns. Ch. 51, 60, and *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 169, 170, and *Dupse v. Thompson*, 4 Barbour, S. C. 288. In *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 8 Wheaton, 211, 214, 215, the court said: "Although we do not find the naked principle, that relief may be granted on account of ignorance of the law, asserted in the books, we find no case in which it has been decided, that a plain and acknowledged mistake in law is beyond the reach of equity." But, when the case came again before the court, upon appeal, in 1 Peters, Sup. Ct. 1, 15, the court (as has been already stated in the text) said: "We hold the general rule to be, that a mistake of this character (that is, a mistake arising from ignorance of the law) is not a ground for reforming a deed, founded on such mistake. And whatever exceptions there may be to this rule, they are not only few in number, but they will be found to have something peculiar in their characters." (*Ante*, § 116.) But the court added, that it was not their intention to lay it down, that there may not be cases in which a court of equity will relieve against a plain mistake, arising from ignorance of law. *Id.* p. 17. In the case of *Marshall v. Collett*, 1 Younge & Coll. 238, Lord Ch. Baron Abinger said, that for mistake of law equity would not set aside a contract. See also *Cockerill v. Cholmeley*, 1 Russ. & Mylne, 418; and *McCarthy v. Decaix*, 2 Russ. & Mylne, 614. The question again came under the review of the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of the *Bank of the United States v. Daniel*, 12 Peters, 32, 55, 56, where the main question was, whether a mistake of law was relievable in equity, it being stripped of all other circumstances; and the court held that it was not. On that occasion the court said: "The main question, on which relief was sought by the bill, that on which the decree below proceeded, and on which the appellees relied in this court for its affirmance, is, can a court of chancery relieve against a mistake of law? In its examination, we will take

§ 138. It is matter of regret, that, in the present state of the law, it is not practicable to present, in any more definite form, the doctrine respecting the effect of mistakes of law, or to clear the subject from some obscurities and uncertainties which still surround it. But it may be safely affirmed, upon the highest authority, as a well-established doctrine, that a mere naked mistake of law, unattended with any such special circumstances as have been

it for granted, that the parties, who took up the bill for ten thousand dollars, included the damages of a thousand dollars in the eight thousand dollar note; and did so, believing the statute of Kentucky secured the penalty to the bank; and that, in the construction of the statute, the appellees were mistaken. Vexed as the question formerly was, and delicate as it now is, from the confusion in which numerous and conflicting decisions have involved it, no discussion of cases can be gone into without hazarding the introduction of exceptions, that will be likely to sap the direct principle we intend to apply. Indeed, the remedial power claimed by courts of chancery to relieve against mistakes of law, is a doctrine rather grounded upon exceptions, than upon established rules. To this course of adjudication we are unwilling to yield. That mere mistakes of law are not remediable, is well established, as was declared by this court in *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 1 Peters, 15; and we can only repeat what was there said, 'that whatever exceptions there may be to the rule, they will be found few in number, and to have something peculiar in their character,' and to involve other elements of decision (1 Story's Eq. Jurisp. § 116). What is this case; and does it turn upon any peculiarity? Griffin sold a bill to the United States Bank, at Lexington, for ten thousand dollars, indorsed by three of the complainants, and accepted by the other, payable at New Orleans; the acceptor, J. D., was present in Kentucky, when the bill was made, and there accepted it; at maturity it was protested for non-payment, and returned. The debtors applied to take it up, when the creditors claimed ten per cent damages, by force of the statute of Kentucky. All the parties bound to pay the bill were perfectly aware of the facts; at least the principals, who transacted the business, had the statute before them, or were familiar with it, as we must presume; they and the bank earnestly believing (as in all probability most others believed at the time) that the ten per cent damages were due by force of the statute, and, influenced by this opinion of the law, the eight thousand dollar note was executed, including the one thousand dollars claimed for damages. Such is the case stated and supposed to exist by the complainants, stripped of all other considerations standing in the way of relief. Testing the case by the principle, 'that a mistake or ignorance of the law forms no ground of relief from contracts fairly entered into, with a full knowledge of the facts;' and under circumstances repelling all presumptions of fraud, imposition, or undue advantage having been taken of the party, none of which are chargeable upon the appellants in this case, the question then is, Were the complainants entitled to relief? To which we respond decidedly in the negative." So far then, as the courts of the United States are concerned, the question may be deemed finally at rest. [* But see *ante*, § 125, and note.]

above suggested, will furnish no ground for the interposition of a court of equity ; and the present disposition of courts of equity is to narrow, rather than to enlarge, the operation of exceptions.¹ It may, however, be added, that, where a judgment is fairly obtained at law upon a contract, and afterwards, upon more solemn consideration of the subject, the point of law, upon which the cause was adjudged, is otherwise decided, no relief will be granted in equity against the judgment upon the ground of mistake of the law ; for that would be to open perpetual sources for renewed litigation.²

[* § 138 *a*. We are not prepared to say, that the present state of the law, upon this vexed question, will allow us to lay down any more definite rules upon the subject, than those already stated. But, as we have already intimated,³ the distinction between mistakes of law and of fact is one of expediency and policy, rather than of principle. For as one is bound to know the law and consequently presumed to know it, there seems to be an inconsistency, in granting relief in courts of equity, based solely upon an alleged mistake of law. So, too, such mistakes are not commonly easy of clear proof, and courts of equity, in assuming to correct alleged mistakes, must of necessity require the very clearest proof, lest they create errors, in attempting to correct them. There is, too, great opportunity for the practice of fraud through alleged mistakes of law, when courts listen readily to such grounds, for setting aside the clearly expressed contracts of the parties.

§ 138 *b*. From these considerations, and some others stated elsewhere, in the course of this chapter, it will be obvious that the general rule, governing courts of equity upon this subject, should be, to deny relief, sought upon the mere ground of ignorance, or mistake of law ; and that the exceptions allowed must be of marked

¹ Lord Cottenham, in his elaborate judgment in *Stewart v. Stewart*, 6 Clark & Finell. 964 to 971, critically examined all the leading authorities upon this subject, and arrived at the same conclusion ; and his opinion was confirmed by the House of Lords. Mr. Burge shows, in his learned Commentaries on Colonial and Foreign Law (Vol. 3, p. 742, &c.), that the like rule prevails in the civil law, and in foreign countries on the continent of Europe, where the civil law prevails. *Kelly v. Solari*, 9 Mees. & Wels. 54, 57, 58, contains a like recognition of the doctrine, by Lord Abinger. See also *Great Western Railway Co. v. Cripps*, 5 Hare, 91.

² Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 131, 132 ; *Lyon v. Richmond*, 2 Johns. Ch. 51.

³ [* *Ante*, § 125 and note.

character, both in regard to proof, and the degree of injustice consequent upon a denial of relief.

§ 138 c. But when the courts established the rule that the forgetfulness of facts, once well known to the party, was a just ground of relief against a contract,¹ they were, in our apprehension, going a long way towards recognizing the principle, that the mistake or misapprehension, of a clearly established rule of law, whereby the party submits to the relinquishment of rights, or assumes duties, upon grounds which he could not have entertained but for such misapprehension, is ground of equitable relief. And where the result of denying relief will be to give the other party an unconscionable advantage, and the fact of such misapprehension is admitted, or proved to the entire satisfaction of the court, it would be strange if it were not a sufficient ground for equitable interference. The denial of relief in such cases would seem to be at variance with the long-established doctrines of courts of equity, and a reproach to the law itself.²

§ 138 d. But it must also be borne in mind, that such relief will not be granted, where from change of circumstances, or the vesting of other rights, or interests, it is no longer practicable to place the parties in the same position they would have been in, had the mistake never occurred, or been corrected at the time of its occurrence.³

§ 138 e. With these important qualifications, which will exclude all cases, where the law is doubtful, at the time, or where there is no marked injustice done, by allowing the contract to stand, or no undue advantage gained, or where other rights have intervened, or

¹ *Kelly v. Solari*, 9 M. & W. 54; *Bell v. Gardiner*, 4 Man. & Granger, 11.

² *Ante*, § 121, and notes. *Saunders v. Lord Annesley*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 73, 101, where Lord Redesdale says, that if one is induced to part with a fee-simple for a mere leasehold interest, "if it were clear beyond all possibility of doubt, in a case of fraud," the court might certainly interfere: "in a case of mere ignorance, though I incline to think it might," yet upon examination he finds it more questionable. The truth is, in almost all cases of this character, there will be found sufficient, although it may be but slight evidence, that the party acted, either upon want of consideration, which amounts to legal surprise, or upon the enticement or suggestion of some one, in the interest of the other party, and this will constitute fraud. And the courts of equity are always vigilant, as they should be, to seize hold of all such extraneous circumstances, to enable them to relieve the one party from unjust loss, and to deprive the other of taking an unconscionable advantage.

³ *Ante*, § 125, and note.

the parties cannot be placed *in statu quo*, the rule that an admitted, or clearly established misapprehension of the law does create a basis for the interference of courts of equity, resting in discretion, and to be exercised only in the most unquestionable and flagrant cases, is certainly more in consonance with the exact moral sense, and will be found, we believe, not at variance with the best considered and best reasoned cases upon the point, both English and American.

§ 138 *f*. No jurist of eminence, or judge of enlarged knowledge and experience, has yet been able to lay down any more restricted rule upon the subject; and we think it creditable to the courts, and to the profession, that, with all the zeal which has been sometimes manifested, to make the rule excluding relief, in courts of equity, in every case of pure mistake of law, absolute and inflexible, the sense of justice has steadily withstood the refinements of logic on the one hand, and the blind love of formal symmetry upon the other. We trust the principle, that cases may and do occur, where courts of equity feel compelled to grant relief, upon the mere ground of the misapprehension of a clear rule of law, which has so long maintained its standing among the fundamental rules of equity jurisprudence, is yet destined to afford the basis of many wise and just decrees, without infringing the general rule that mistake of law is presumptively no sufficient ground of equitable interference.¹

¹ The following cases (Ad. Eq. 168, Am. note) not before referred to will be found to illustrate the propositions maintained in § 138 *a*–138 *f*. *Lowndes v. Chisolm*, 2 McCord's Ch. 455; *Hopkins's Ex'r v. Mazyck*, 1 Hill, Ch. 251; *Drew v. Clarke, Cooke*, 374; *Lammot v. Bowly*, 6 Har. & Johns. 500; *Gilbert v. Gilbert*, 9 Barb. s. c. 534; *Arthur v. Arthur*, 10 id. 9; *Mathews v. Terwilliger*, 3 id. 50; *Dupre v. Thompson*, 4 id. 279. See also, *ante*, § 125, and note; *Stone v. Godfrey*, 18 Jurist, 162; affirmed id. 524; s. c. 23 L. J. N. S. Ch. 769, 5 De G., M. & G. 76; *Lawton v. Champion*, 18 Jurist, 818; 23 L. J. N. S. Ch. 505; *Ashhurst v. Mill, et vice versa*, 7 Hare, 502; *Mellish v. Robertson*, 25 Vt. 603; *Howard v. Puffer*, 23 Vt. 365; *Fletcher v. Jackson*, 23 Vt. 581, 597, 598; *McDaniels v. Bank of Rutland*, 29 Vt. 230.

In *Key v. Simpson*, 6 Iredell, Eq. 462, cited 2 Lead. Cas. in Eq. 682, it is said that equity may always intervene when there is any thing to amend by, and hence when a deed drawn in pursuance of a prior written contract was through inadvertence not so expressed as to give effect to the contract, it was reformed. And probably courts of equity would always be prepared to go to that extent, where the departure from the contract was important. This, then, reduces the question to one of difficulty and uncertainty of proof, which is perhaps all the real distinction,

§ 138 *g*. The English courts evidently regard with favor this branch of equity jurisprudence. There is certainly not the same enthusiasm manifested, by the courts in Westminster Hall, to stigmatize the idea of asking relief, in a court of equity, from the consequences of a mistake of law, as a gross and puerile absurdity, which we sometimes meet upon this side of the Atlantic.¹ The very latest decisions of the English courts treat it as a recognized and highly beneficial branch of remedial justice.²

§ 138 *h*. We wish only to add here, what will probably occur to the careful student, that this entire subject of equitable relief, upon the ground of mistake, either of law or of fact, is altogether exceptional, and quite one side of any thing contemplated,

in principle, between relief in equity, for mistakes of law, and of fact. The American courts have frequently granted relief for mistakes of law, or avowed a willingness to do so. *Larkins v. Biddle*, 21 Alabama, 252; *State v. Paup.* 8 Eng. (Ark.) 129. *Williams v. Champion*, 6 Ham. 169; *Evants v. Strode*, 11 Ohio, 480; *Beardsley v. Knight*, 10 Vt. 185; *McNaughten v. Partridge*, 11 Ohio, 223; *Bank of Rochester v. Emerson*, 10 Paige, 359; *Champlin v. Laytin*, 1 Edw. Ch. 467; *Green v. Morris and Essex R. R. Besley*, Ch. 165; *Newell v. Stiles*, 21 Ga. 118.

In the case of *Canedy v. Marcy*, 13 Gray, 373, a deed was reformed upon satisfactory oral proof, that the words used by the scrivener did not express the intent of the parties, although supposed by him to do so at the time he drew the instrument. And in *Sawyer v. Hovey*, 3 Allen, 331, it is said that in order to sustain a bill in equity to reform a deed, on the ground of mistake, there must be full and satisfactory proof that it does not conform to the oral contract, as understood by either party. And in another case before the same court, *Andrew v. Spurr*, 8 Allen, 412, it was held, as before stated, that where the party trusted to an oral agreement and did not intend to have it inserted in the deed, the court could not reform the deed so as to embrace it, even when the party fraudulently refused to perform it. But where the grantor orally agreed upon the sale of land at a specific price by the acre, to warrant the quantity at the estimation, and, if it fell short, to refund the price in proportion to the deficiency; and the deed being drawn with such a covenant, the grantor fraudulently erases the whole covenant and delivers the deed to the grantee without informing him of the erasure, and thus de ceives him into the belief that the deed at the time of delivery contains that covenant, the court will direct the deed to be reformed according to the contract. *Metcalf v. Putnam*, 9 Allen, 97.

¹ *Champlin v. Laytin*, 18 Wendell, 407.

² *Stone v. Godfrey*, 5 De G., M. & G. 76. The rule is here laid down, "That the court has power to relieve against mistakes of law, as well as against mistakes of fact." But it is added, "the court must be satisfied that the plaintiff's conduct has been determined by these mistakes." And the party seeking relief must not have been guilty of laches. *Campbell v. Ingilby*, 1 De Gex & Jones, 893. See also *Broughton v. Hutt*, 3 De Gex & J. 501; *Crofts v. Middleton*, 2 Kay & Johnson, 194.

in the law of contracts. In the inception of contracts it must always be assumed, in regard to both these classes of mistakes, that the parties impliedly stipulate that they will, each for himself, run his own risk. That is confessedly the implied condition of all contracts. And the parties cannot properly ask to be relieved from any merely incidental hardship resulting from being under mistake, either as to the true state of the facts or of the law.

§ 138 *i*. But where the mistake is of so fundamental a character, that the minds of the parties have never, in fact, met; or where an unconscionable advantage has been gained, by mere mistake or misapprehension; and there was no gross negligence on the part of the plaintiff, either in falling into the error, or in not sooner claiming redress; and no intervening rights have accrued; and the parties may still be placed *in statu quo*; equity will interfere, in its discretion, in order to prevent intolerable injustice. This we believe to be the clearly defined and well established rule upon the subject, in courts of equity, both in England and America.¹

§ 138 *k*. The question of reforming deeds and other instruments, on the ground of mistake or fraud, is carefully examined and judiciously presented by Mr. Justice Kellogg, of the Vermont Supreme Court, in a recent case.² Here the plaintiff conveyed to

¹ *Ante*, § 138 *f*, and note; *post*, § 141, 142.

² *Brown v. Lamphear*, 35 Vt. 252. See *Segee v. Thomas*, 3 Blatchf. C. C. 11, where the court enjoined a minor who had received the purchase-money for land, sold by order of the probate court, from disturbing the purchaser, and compelled him to give an effective release of the title, the purchaser having made valuable improvements. But see *contra Dickey v. Beatty*, 14 Ohio N. S. 389. The rule of reforming deeds in equity is defined in *Adams v. Stevens*, 49 Me. 362, as a decree, that the instrument shall be read and construed, as it was originally intended by the parties. But this can only be done while the interest remains between the original parties, or those buying with notice, *ib*. See also *Prescott v. Hawkins*, 16 N. H. 122. It was here held that where one is notified before he takes his deed, it is the same as if he had notice before he made the contract. And a mortgagor, having sold the securities and repurchased them, is thereby remitted to his original status. *Kennard v. George*, 44 N. H. 440. Here the court decreed the confirmation of a void mortgage deed. But where one had, under a mistake of the law, given consent for a highway to be laid out across his lands equity will afford him no relief. *Marble v. Whitney*, 28 N. Y. 297. See also *Rider v. Powell*, *id*. 310. It must appear that the contract is different from the understanding of both parties to justify the court in reforming it. *Schettiger v. Hopple*, 3 Grant's Cas. 54; *s. p. Nevius v. Dunlap*, 33 N. Y. 676. See also *Bartle v. Vosbury*, 3 Grant's Cas. 277; *Hunter v. Bilyea*, 30 Ill. 228.

the defendant a piece of land, on which was a spring from which the plaintiff's aqueduct supplied his own and other premises with water. The aqueduct was of greater value to the plaintiff than the price received for the land, and he did not intend to part with the right to use the water in the spring; but by mistake no reservation was made in the deed. The defendant, at the time of the purchase, had no knowledge of the existence of the spring. It was held that the plaintiff was entitled either to such a conveyance from the defendant as would entitle him to the use of the water from the spring, or else to a reconveyance of the land, upon the repayment of the price, and the defendant might elect which form of remedy he preferred the plaintiff should have.

§ 188 l. There is a somewhat recent case in Connecticut,¹ where the mortgagee of land applied to the agent of the defendants to have his interest as mortgagee insured, and the agent supposing that was the legal mode of effecting it, drew the application as for an insurance upon the property in the name of the mortgagor and payable to the mortgagee in case of loss, and had the policy made

Equity will interfere to annex a condition to a railway subscription, that the road shall be constructed on a particular route or the subscriber shall not be bolden, and which was omitted by mistake. *Gelpcke v. Blake*, 15 Iowa, 387; *Jack v. Naber*, id. 450. But the court declined to affix a seal to a voluntary instrument which was invalid for want of it, and which was agreed to be affixed. *Eaton v. Eaton*, id. 259. But this is upon the ground that equity will not reform any mere voluntary deed or contract which is defectively executed, but will leave the party to his remedy at law. *Hunt v. Frazier*, 6 Jones, Eq. 290; *Henderson v. Dickey*, 35 Mo. 120. But the cases all agree that the proof to justify reforming a deed must be such as to strike all minds alike, as free from all reasonable doubt. *Edmunds's Appeal*, 59 Penn. St. 220. Mistake, of law and fact combined, may afford ground for equitable relief, but not of law only. *Gross v. Leber*, 47 Penn. St. 520. But see *Clayton v. Bussey*, 30 Ga. 946; *Burt v. Wilson*, 28 Calif. 672.

The discharge of a mortgage entered by mistake on the margin of the record, may be set aside in equity. *Bruce v. Bonney*, 12 Gray, 107. Where the mortgagee of land had cancelled the mortgage on the ground of misdescription and taken another on the fraudulent representation that the land was still free from encumbrance, equity will revive and reform the former mortgage. *Loomis v. Hudson*, 18 Iowa, 416. So also equity will reform a mortgage against the purchaser of the land with notice that it was intended to have been embraced in the mortgage and was by mistake omitted. *Ruhling v. Hackett*, 1 Nev. 360.

¹ *Woodbury Savings Bank v. Charter Oak Ins. Co.*, 31 Conn. 517; *s. P. Longhurst v. Star Ins. Co.*, 19 Iowa, 364. See also *Jordan v. Stevens*, 51 Me. 78; *Freeman v. Curtis*, id. 140.]

in conformity with it. It was held that a court of equity will correct the mistake, although one of law and not of fact.]

§ 139. Where a *bonâ fide* purchaser, for a valuable consideration, without notice, is concerned, equity will not interfere to grant relief in favor of a party, although he has acted in ignorance of his title upon a mistake of law;¹ for in such a case the purchaser has, at least, an equal right to protection with the party laboring under the mistake.² And where the equities are equal, the court withholds itself from any interference between the parties.³

¹ See *Ligon v. Rogers*, 12 Geo. 292.

² *Ante*, § 64 c, § 108; *post*, § 154, 165, 381, 409, 434, 436.

³ See *Malden v. Menill*, 2 Atk. 8; *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 166, 169, 170. In the civil law, there is much discussion as to the effect of error of law; and no inconsiderable embarrassment exists in stating, in what cases of error in law the party is relievable, and in what not. It is certain that a wide distinction was made between the operation of errors of law, and errors of fact. In *omni parte error in jure non eodem loco, quo facti ignorantia, haberi debet; cum jus finitum et possit esse, et debeat; facti interpretatio plerumque etiam prudentissimos fallat*. Dig. Lib. 22, tit. 6, l. 2. Hence, in many cases, error of law will prejudice a party in regard to his rights; but not error of fact, unless in cases of gross negligence. Dig. Lib. 22, tit. 6, l. 7. The general rule of the civil law seems to be, that error of law shall not profit those who are desirous of acquiring an advantage or right; nor shall it prejudice those who are seeking their own right. *Juris ignorantia non prodest adquirere volentibus; suum vero petentibus non nocet*. Dig. Lib. 22, tit. 6, l. 7; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 22, tit. 6, § 2, n. 2, 3. But then this text is differently interpreted by different civilians. See 2 Evans's Pothier on Oblig. Appendix, No. xviii. p. 408 to 447; Ayliffe, Pand. B. 2, tit. 15, p. 116; 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 8, § 1, art. 13 to 16. Domat, after saying that error of law is not sufficient, as an error in fact is, to annul contracts, says, that error or ignorance of law hath different effects in contracts; and then he lays down the following rules. (1.) If error or ignorance of law be such, that it is the only cause of a contract, in which one obliges himself to a thing, to which he is otherwise not bound, and there be no other cause for the contract, the cause proving false, the contract is null. (2.) This rule applies, not only in preserving the person from suffering loss, but also in hindering him from being deprived of a right, which he did not know belonged to him. (3.) But, if by an error or ignorance of the law, one has done himself a prejudice, which cannot be repaired without breaking in upon the right of another, the error shall not be corrected to the prejudice of the latter. (4.) If the error or ignorance of the law has not been the only cause of the contract, but another motive has intervened, the error will not annul the contract. And he proceeds to illustrate these rules. 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 18, § 1, art. 13 to 17. See also Ayliffe, Pand. B. 2, tit. 15; id. tit. 17; 2 Evans's Pothier on Oblig. Appendix, xviii. p. 408; id. 437; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 22, tit. 6, per tot; *ante*, § 111, and note.

§ 140. In regard to the other class of mistakes, that is, mistakes of fact, there is not so much difficulty. The general rule is, that an act done, or contract made, under a mistake or ignorance of a material fact, is voidable and relievable in equity. The ground of this distinction between ignorance of law and ignorance of fact seems to be, that, as every man of reasonable understanding is presumed to know the law, and to act upon the rights which it confers or supports, when he knows all the facts, it is culpable negligence in him to do an act, or to make a contract, and then to set up his ignorance of law as a defence. The general maxim here is, as in other cases, that the law aids those who are vigilant, and not those who slumber over their rights. And this reason is recognized as the foundation of the distinction, as well in the civil law as in the common law.¹ But no person can be presumed to be acquainted with all matters of fact; neither is it possible, by any degree of diligence, in all cases to acquire that knowledge; and, therefore, an ignorance of facts does not import culpable negligence. The rule applies not only to cases where there has been a studied suppression or concealment of the facts by the other side, which would amount to fraud; but also to many cases of innocent ignorance and mistake on both sides.² So, if a party has *bond fide* entirely forgotten the facts, he will be entitled to relief, because, under such circumstances, he acts under the like mistake of the facts, as if he had never known them.³ Ignorance of for-

¹ See Pothier, Pand. Lib. 22, tit. 6, § 3, n. 4, 5, 6, 7; § 4, n. 10, 11; Ayliffe's Pand. B. 2, tit. 15, p. 116; 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 18, § 1; Doct. & Stud. Dial. 2, ch. 47; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 7, note (v); Pooley v. Ray, 1 P. Will. 355; Cocking v. Pratt, 1 Ves. 400; Hitchcock v. Giddings, 4 Price, 135; Leonard v. Leonard, 2 Ball & Beatt. 171, 180 to 184; Pearson v. Lord, 6 Mass. 81; Garland v. Salem Bank, 9 Mass. 408; 1 Madd. Ch. Pr. 60 to 64; Daniell v. Mitchell, 1 Story, 172.

² See Miles v. Stevens, 3 Burr. 21; Leger v. Bonnaffe, 2 Barb. 475. Ignorance of facts and mistake of facts are not precisely equivalent expressions. Mistake of facts always supposes some error of opinion as to the real facts; but ignorance of facts may be without any error, but result in mere want of knowledge or opinion. Thus, a man knowing that he has some interest in a parcel of land, may suppose it to be a *life-estate*, when it is a *fee*. That is an error or mistake. But if he is ignorant that there exists any such land, and that he had any title to it, that very ignorance may lead him to form no opinion whatever on the subject. It may be a case of sheer negation of thought. The phrases are, however, commonly used as equivalent in legal discussions. Canal Bank v. Bank of Albany, 1 Hill, N. Y. 287.

³ Kelly v. Solari, 9 Mees. & Wels. 54, 58. [* If it were pertinent, one might

foreign law is deemed to be ignorance of fact, because no person is presumed to know the foreign law; and it must be proved as a fact.¹

§ 141. The rule, as to ignorance or mistake of facts, entitling the party to relief, has this important qualification, that the fact must be material to the act or contract, that is, that it must be essential to its character, and an efficient cause of its concoction. For though there may be an accidental ignorance or mistake of a fact; yet, if the act or contract is not materially affected by it, the party claiming relief will be denied it. This distinction may be easily illustrated by a familiar case. A. buys an estate of B., to which the latter is supposed to have an unquestionable title. It turns out, upon due investigation of the facts, unknown at the time to both parties, that B. has no title (as if there be a nearer heir than B., who was supposed to be dead, but is, in fact living): in such a case equity would relieve the purchaser, and rescind the contract.² But, suppose A. were to sell an estate to B., whose location was well known to each, and they mutually believed it to contain twenty acres, and in point of fact it only contained nineteen acres and three-fourths of an acre, and the difference would not have varied the purchase in the view of either party; in such a case, the mistake would not be a ground to rescind the contract.³ [On the other hand, if the vendor represented the land as situated in one county when it was in fact in another, this is a sufficient mistake to justify a court in refusing specific performance, although the vendor was innocent of any fraud.⁴ So if the mistake be in the *quantity* of the land sold, as four acres instead of eight, this is sufficient to justify a court of equity in rescinding the contract: it being proved that the deficiency was material in the object of ask how the mere forgetfulness of facts, which is either voluntary or negligent, should be less culpable than the ignorance of the law, which nothing short of the spirit of inspiration or prophecy can always remove.]

¹ *Leslie v. Bailie*, 2 Younge & Coll. N. R. 91, 96; *Haven v. Foster*, 9 Pick. 113, 130; *Raynham v. Canton*, 3 Pick. 293; *Kenny v. Clarkson*, 1 Johns. 38; *Frith v. Sprague*, 14 Mass. 455; *Consequa v. Willings*, 1 Peters, Cir. Ct. 22; [* *McCormick v. Garnett*, 5 De G., M. & G. 278.]

² See 1 *Evans*, Pothier on Oblig. Pt. 1, ch. 1, art. 9, n. 17, 18; *Bingham v. Bingham*, 1 Ves. 126; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 2, § 7. See also *Bailey v. James*, 11 *Gratt.* 468; *Calverly v. Williams*, 1 *Ves. Jr.* 210, 211.

³ See *Smith v. Evans*, 6 *Binn.* 102; *Voorhees v. DeMeyer*, 2 *Barb.* 37; *Manly v. Pearson*, 2 *Johns.* 37; *O'Kill v. Whittaker*, 1 *De Gex & Smale*, 83.

⁴ *Best v. Stow*, 2 *Sandf. Ch.* 298.

the purchase. And this would be so although the land was described as being eight acres, "more or less," — those words being confined to a reasonable allowance for small errors in surveys, and for variations in instruments.^{1]}

§ 142. In cases of mutual mistake going to the essence of the contract, it is not necessary that there should be any presumption of fraud. On the contrary equity will often relieve, however innocent the parties may be. Thus, if one person should sell a messuage to another, which was, at the time, swept away by a flood, or destroyed by an earthquake, without any knowledge of the fact by either party, a court of equity would relieve the purchaser, upon the ground that both parties intended the purchase and sale of a subsisting thing, and implied its existence as the basis of their contract. It constituted, therefore, the very essence and condition of the obligation of their contract.² So, if a person should execute a release to another party upon the supposition founded in a mistake, that a certain debt or annuity had been discharged, although both parties were innocent, the release would be set aside upon the ground of a mistake.³ The civil law holds the same principle. "Domum emi, cum eam, et ego, et venditor combustam ignoraremus. Nerva, Sabinus, Cassius, nihil venisse, quamvis area maneat, pecuniæque solutam condici possi, aiunt."⁴

§ 143. The same principle will apply to all other cases, where the parties mutually bargain for and upon the supposition of an existing right. Thus, if a purchaser should buy the interest of the vendor in a remainder in fee, expectant upon an estate tail,

¹ *Belknap v. Sealey*, 2 Duer, 579; and see *Quesnel v. Woodlief*, 2 Hen. & Munf. 173, note; *Day v. Fynn*, Owen, 133. But see *Ketchum v. Stout*, 20 Ohio, 155; *Stall v. Hart*, 9 Gill, 446.

² *Hitchcock v. Giddings*, 4 Price, 135, 141; s. c. Daniel, 1; 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 469 (2d edit.). But see Sugden on Vendors, p. 237, and note 1 (7th edit.); *Stent v. Bailis*, 2 P. Will. 220; [* *Colyer v. Clay*, 7 Beavan, 188].

³ *Hore v. Becher*, 12 Simons, 465.

⁴ Dig. Lib. 18, tit. 1, l. 27; 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 468, 469 (2d edit.); *Grotius de Jure Belli*, B. 2, ch. 11, § 7. If the house were partially burnt, the civilians seemed to have entertained different opinions, whether the vendor was bound by the contract, having an abatement of the price or allowance for the injury, or had an election to proceed or not with the contract, with such an abatement or allowance. See 2 Kent, Lect. 39, p. 469 (4th edit.); *Pothier de Vente*, n. 4. Grotius has made some sensible remarks upon the subject of error in contracts. *Grotius de Jure Belli*, B. 2, ch. 11, § 6.

and the tenant in tail had at the time, unknown to both parties, actually suffered a recovery, and thus barred the estate in remainder, a court of equity would relieve the purchaser, in regard to the contract, purely upon the ground of mistake.¹ [So a mutual mistake of parties as to the vendor's interest in the land sold is good cause for setting aside the sale.²]

§ 143 *a*. It will make no difference, in the application of the principle, that the subject-matter of the contract be known to both parties to be liable to a contingency, which may destroy it immediately; for if the contingency has, unknown to the parties, already happened, the contract will be void, as founded upon a mutual mistake of a matter, constituting the basis of the contract. Thus, if a life-estate should be sold, and at the time of the sale the estate is terminated by the death of the party in whom the estate is vested, and that fact is unknown to both parties, a court of equity would rescind the contract, upon the ground of a mutual mistake of the fact, which constituted the basis of the contract.³ So, if a horse should be purchased, which is by both parties believed to be alive, but is at the time of the purchase in fact dead, the purchaser would, upon the same ground, be relieved by rescinding the contract, if the money was not paid; and if paid, by decreeing the money to be paid back.⁴

§ 143 *b*. The same principle has been applied to the case of a contract between two persons, whereby one contracted for a large sum, as a contingent compensation for his services in prosecuting a claim of the other against a foreign government for an illegal capture, if it should be successful; and at the time of the contract, the claim had, unknown to both parties, been allowed by the foreign government, with a stipulation for a due payment thereof; for the very basis of the contract was future services to be rendered in prosecuting the claim; and unless such services were rendered, there was no consideration to support it.⁵

¹ *Hitchcock v. Giddings*, 4 Price, 135; s. c. Daniel, 1.

² *Irick v. Fulton*, 3 Gratt. 193. [* And where the plaintiff built a valuable dwelling-house, upon the defendant's land, both supposing the land to belong to the plaintiff, the court relieved him, in a manner to be of the least inconvenience to defendant, giving him the election to sell his land or buy the plaintiff's house.] *McKelway v. Armour*, 2 Stock. Ch. 115.]

³ *Allen v. Hammond*, 11 Peters, 71.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 63, 71 to 73.

§ 144. The same principle will apply to cases of purchases, where the parties have been innocently misled under a mutual mistake as to the extent of the thing sold. Thus, if one party thought that he had *bonâ fide* purchased a piece of land, as parcel of an estate, and the other thought he had not sold it, under a mutual mistake of the bargain; that would furnish a ground to set aside the contract; because (as has been said) it is impossible to say, that one shall be forced to give that price for part only, which he intended to give for the whole; or, that the other shall be obliged to sell the whole for what he intended to be the price of part only.¹ But where by the mutual mistake of vendor and purchaser, as to the duration of a leasehold interest, it was sold for much less than its real value, and the conveyance had been executed, and the purchaser had been in possession some years, the vendor was held entitled to no relief against the representatives of the vendee.²]

§ 144 a. But here the nature of the purchase often constitutes a material ingredient. Thus, if a purchase is made of a thing in gross, as, for example, of a farm, as containing in gross by estimation a certain number of acres (such a sale is called in the Roman law a sale *per aversionem*) by certain boundaries. Then, if the transaction be *bonâ fide*, and both parties be equally under a mistake as to the quantity, but not as to the boundaries, the sale will be binding on both parties, whether the farm contain more or fewer acres.³

§ 145. It is upon the same ground that a court of equity proceeds, where an instrument is so general in its terms, as to release the rights of the party to property, to which he was wholly ignorant that he had any title, and which was not within the contemplation of the bargain at the time when it was made. In such cases the court restrains the instrument to the purposes of the bargain, and confines the release to the right intended to be released or extinguished.⁴

¹ *Calverly v. Williams*, 1 Ves. Jr. 210, 211. But see *Okill v. Whittaker*, 1 De Gex & Smale, 83. See also *Richardson v. Bleight*, 8 B. Monroe, 580.

² *Okill v. Whittaker*, 1 De Gex & Smale, 83. And see *Churchill v. Rogers*, Monroe, 81; *Best v. Stow*, 2 Sandf. Ch. 298.

³ *Morris Canal Co. v. Emmett*, 9 Paige, 168; *Stebbins v. Eddy*, 4 Mason, 14; *post*, § 195. But see *Belknap v. Scaley*, 2 Duer, 579; *ante*, § 141. See Dig. Lib. 18, tit. 6, l. 35, § 5.

⁴ *Farewell v. Coker*, cited 2 Meriv. 352; *Ramsden v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 304.

⁵ But a court of equity cannot annex a clause to a contract however just and

§ 146. It is not, however, sufficient in all cases, to give the party relief, that the fact is material; but it must be such as he could not by reasonable diligence get knowledge of, when he was put upon inquiry. For, if by such reasonable diligence he could have obtained knowledge of the fact, equity will not relieve him; since that would be to encourage culpable negligence. Thus, if a party has lost his cause at law from the want of proof of a fact, which by ordinary diligence he could have obtained, he is not relievable in equity; for the general rule is, that if the party becomes remediless at law by his own negligence, equity will not relieve him.¹

necessary it may be, provided the parties did not agree to it. *Thompsonville Scale M. Co. v. Osgood*, 26 Conn. 16. Nor where the clause was designedly omitted from the contract, to depend on defendant's honor. *Betts v. Gunn*, 31 Alabama, 219.]

¹ Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3; [* *Wason v. Wareing*, 15 Beavan, 151;] *Penney v. Martin*, 4 Johns. Ch. 566; *Butman v. Hussey*, 30 Maine, 266; *Schroepf v. Shaw*, 3 Coms. 451. The rule of the civil law is the same. *Sed facti ignorantia ita demum cuique non nocet, si non ei summa negligentia obijciatur. Quod, enim si omnes in civitate sciant, quod ille solus ignorat? Et recte Labbeus definit, scientiam neque curiosissimi neque negligentissimi hominis accipiendam verum ejus, qui eam rem diligenter inquirendo notam habere possit.* Dig. L. 1. 22, tit. 6, l. 9, § 2; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 22, tit. 6, § 4, n. 11. In the late case of *Bell v. Gardner*, 4 Mann. & Granger, 11, 24, it was held, that, at law, a promise to pay a note under ignorance of facts, but where the party had the means of knowledge, and might have made inquiry, did not bind him. The same point was decided in *Kelly v. Solari*, 9 Mees. & Welsb. 54, and *Lucas v. Worwick*, 1 Mood. & Rob. 293. All these cases at law proceed upon the ground that a mistake of material facts will avoid a promise made on the foundation of that mistake, even when he had the means of knowledge within his reach. But courts of equity proceed upon a somewhat differently modified doctrine. If relief can be given at law, then there is no ground for any application to a court of equity for relief. But if a court of equity is asked to give relief in a case not fully remediable at law, or not remediable at all at law, then it grants it upon its own terms, and according to its own doctrines. It gives relief only to the vigilant and not to the negligent; to those who have not been put upon their diligence to make inquiry, and not to those who, being put upon inquiry, have chosen to omit all inquiry, which would have enabled them at once to correct the mistake, or to obviate all ill effects therefrom. In short, it refuses all its aid to those who, by their own negligence, and by that alone, have incurred the loss, or may suffer the inconvenience. It is one thing to act under a mistake of fact, having the means of inquiry, but without being aware of the necessity of ascertaining the facts, and quite a different thing to omit all inquiry in due season, when the party is aware of the necessity and the mode of the inquiry is pointed out to him, or is within his reach. [* Equity sets aside settlements made by the parties under misapprehension. *M'Crae v. Hollis*, 4 Desaus. 122; *Barnett v. Barnett*, 6 J. J. Marshall, 499. (Ad. Eq. 418.) See *post*, § 400, 400 a.]

[* There are many cases, where equity will not interpose, where the party was under mistake, and without fault.]

§ 147. Nor is it in every case, where even a material fact is mistaken or unknown without any default of the parties, that a court of equity will interpose. The fact may be unknown to both parties, or it may be known to one party and unknown to the other. If it is known to one party, and unknown to the other, that will in some cases afford a solid ground for relief; as, for instance, where it operates as a surprise, or a fraud, upon the ignorant party.¹ But in all such cases, the ground of relief is, not the mistake or ignorance of material facts alone; but the unconscientious advantage taken of the party by the concealment of them.² For if the parties act fairly, and it is not a case where one is bound to communicate the facts to the other, upon the ground of confidence, or otherwise, there the court will not interfere. Thus, if A., knowing that there is a mine in the land of B., of which he knows that B. is ignorant, should buy the land without disclosing the fact to B., for a price in which the mine is not taken into consideration, B. would not be entitled to relief from the contract; because A., as the buyer, is not obliged, from the nature of the contract, to make the discovery.³ [* There must always be shown, either the mistake of both parties, or the mistake of one, with the fraudulent concealment of the other, to justify a court of equity in reforming a contract.⁴]

§ 148. And it is essential, in order to set aside such a transaction, not only that an advantage should be taken; but it must arise from some obligation in the party to make the discovery; not from an obligation in point of morals only, but of legal duty. In such a case the court will not correct the contract, merely because a man of nice morals and honor would not have entered into it. It must fall within some definition of fraud or surprise.⁵ For, the rules of

¹ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, ch. 2, p. 366, 367; id. ch. 3, p. 387; Leonard v. Leonard, 2 Ball & Beatt. 179, 180, and the case cited in Mortimer v. Capper, the lord chancellor, 1 Brown, Ch. 158; 6 Ves. 24; Gordon v. Gordon, 3 Anst. 462, 467, 471, 473, 476, 477.

² See East India Company v. Donald, 9 Ves. 275; Earl of Bath and Montagu's case, 3 Ch. Cas. 56, 74, 103, 114.

³ Post, § 207, note.

[* Wright v. Goff, 22 Beavan, 207; The Metropolitan Counties Society v. Wn, 26 Beavan, 454; Diman v. Pr. W. & B. Rail. Co. 5 Rh. I. 130.].

Fox v. Mackreth, 2 Bro. Ch. 420; 1 White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas. 72;

law must be so drawn, as not to affect the general transactions of mankind, or to require that all persons should, in all respects, be upon the same level as to information, diligence, and means of judgment. Equity as a practical system, although it will not aid in morality, does not affect to enforce mere moral duties. But its policy is to administer relief to the vigilant, and to put all parties upon the exercise of a searching diligence.¹ Where confidence is reposed, or the party is intentionally misled, relief may be granted; but in such a case there is the ingredient of what the law deems a fraud. Cases falling under this predicament will more properly come in review in a subsequent part of this work.²

§ 149. A like principle applies to cases where the means of information are open to both parties; and where each is presumed to exercise his own skill, diligence, and judgment in regard to all extrinsic circumstances. In such cases equity will not relieve. Thus, if the vendee is in possession of facts, which will materially enhance the price of the commodity, and of which he knows the vendor to be ignorant, he is not bound to communicate those facts to the vendor, and the contract will be held valid.³ It has been justly observed, that it would be difficult to circumscribe the con-

1 *Mad. Eq. Pl.* 63, 64; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 1, ch. 3, § 4, note (n); *Earl of Bath and Montague's case*, 3 *Ch. Cas.* 56, 74, 103, 114.

¹ 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 1, ch. 5, § 8, note (h).

² See *Leonard v. Leonard*, 2 *Ball & Beatt.* 179, 180; *Gordon v. Gordon*, 3 *Swanst.* 463, 467, 470, 473, 476, 477. See on this subject, 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 1, ch. 3, § 4, note (n); *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* 383, &c.; 1 *Mad. Eq. Pr.* 204, &c.; *Laidlaw v. Organ*, 2 *Wheat.* 178; *Pothier de Vente*, n. 233 to 241; 2 *Wheat.* 185, note; *Smith v. Bank of Scotland*, 1 *Dow. Parl.* 294; *Pidcock v. Bishop*, 3 *B. & Cressw.* 605; *Etting v. Bank of U. S.* 11 *Wheat.* 59, and cases there cited; *post*, § 260 to 273, 308 to 328.

³ *Laidlaw v. Organ*, 2 *Wheat.* 178, 195. [* This case has been severely criticised in the able commentary of Mr. Verplank. It is questionable, perhaps, how far the case is defensible, upon the ground here stated. But if it can be justified at all, it must be because the facts withheld did not concern the essential and inherent qualities of the articles sold, but only such accidental relations, as were within the contemplation of both parties, and where no confidence, either in fact or in contemplation of law, existed. We always regret the necessity of vindicating the legality of such a transaction, since it has the appearance of justifying fraud and circumvention, which must ever bear, to the healthy moral sense, very much the appearance of becoming partaker in the iniquity. Such an attempt is never more questionable, than while discussing those comprehensive principles of truth and justice, which lie at the foundation of equity jurisprudence.]

rary doctrine within proper limits, where the intelligence is equally accessible to both parties.¹ And, where it is not, the same remark applies with the same force, if it is not a case of mutual confidence, or of a designed misleading of the vendor.² Thus, if a vendee has private knowledge of a declaration of war, or of a treaty of peace, or of other political arrangements (in respect to which men speculate for themselves), which materially affect the price of commodities, he is not bound to disclose the fact to the vendor at the time of his purchase; but, at least in a legal and equitable sense, he may innocently be silent. For there is no pretence to say, that upon such matters men repose confidence in each other, any more than they do in regard to other matters, affecting the rise and fall of markets.³ The like principle applies to all other cases, where the parties act upon their own judgment in matters mutually open to them. Thus, if an agreement for the composition of a cause is fairly made between parties with their eyes open, and rightly informed, a court of equity will not overhaul it, although there has been a great mistake in the exercise of their judgment.⁴

§ 150. In like manner, where the fact is equally unknown to both parties; or where each has equal and adequate means of information; or where the fact is doubtful from its own nature; in every such case, if the parties have acted with entire good faith, a court of equity will not interpose.⁵ For in such cases the equity is deemed equal between the parties; and, when it is so, a court of equity is generally passive, and rarely exerts an active jurisdiction. Thus, where there was a contract by A. to sell to B., for

¹ Ibid.

² Pothier, in his treatise on the subject of Sales, has treated this subject with great ability; and has cited the doctrines of the civil law, and the discussions of civilians and writers upon natural law on this subject. While he contends strenuously for the doctrine of good faith and full discovery in all cases; he is compelled to admit, that the doctrines in *foro conscientiæ* have had little support in judicial tribunals, and, indeed, are not easily applicable to the common business of life. Indeed he admits, that, though concealment of material facts by the vendee, which may enhance the price, is wrong in *foro conscientiæ*; yet, that it would too much restrict the freedom of commerce to apply such a rule in civil transactions. See Pothier, *Traité de Vente*, P. 2, ch. 2, n. 233 to 242; id. Pt. 3, § 2, n. 294 to 298; 2 Wheat. 185, note (c).

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Brown v. Pring*, 1 Ves. 408.

⁵ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 7, note (v); 1 Powell on Contr. 200; 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 62 to 64.

£20, such an allotment, as the commissioners under an enclosure act should make for him; and neither party at the time knew what the allotment would be, and were equally in the dark as to the value; the contract was held obligatory, although it turned out upon the allotment to be worth £200.¹ The like rule will apply to all cases of sale of real estate or personal estate, made in good faith, where material circumstances, affecting the value, are equally unknown to both parties.

§ 151. The general ground upon which all these distinctions proceed, is, that mistake or ignorance of facts in parties, is a proper subject of relief only when it constitutes a material ingredient in the contract of the parties, and disappoints their intention by a mutual error; or where it is inconsistent with good faith, and proceeds from a violation of the obligations which are imposed by law upon the conscience of either party. But where each party is equally innocent, and there is no concealment of facts which the other party has a right to know, and no surprise or imposition exists, the mistake or ignorance, whether mutual or unilateral, is treated as laying no foundation for equitable interference. It is strictly *damnum absque injuria*.²

§ 152. One of the most common classes of cases, in which relief is sought in equity, on account of a mistake of facts, is that of written agreements, either executory or executed. Sometimes by mistake, the written agreement contains less than the parties intended; sometimes it contains more; and sometimes it simply varies from their intent by expressing something different in substance from the truth of that intent. In all such cases, if the mistake is clearly made out by proofs entirely satisfactory, equity will reform the contract, so as to make it conformable to the precise intent of the parties.³ But if the proofs are doubtful and unsatisfactory, and the mistake is not made entirely plain, equity will withhold relief; upon the ground, that the written paper ought

¹ Cited in *Mortimer v. Capper*, 1 Bro. Ch. 158; 6 Ves. 24; 1 Mad. Eq. Fr. 63; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 7, note (v). See also *Pullen v. Ready*, 2 Atk. 592; *Gordon v. Gordon*, 3 Swanst. 463, 467, 470, 471, 473, 476, 477; *Ainslie v. Medlycott*, 9 Ves. 13.

² See *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, p. 358; *Okill v. Whittaker*, 1 De Gex & Smale, 83; s. c. 2 Phil. Ch. 388; *McAninch v. Laughlin*, 13 Penn. St. Rep. 371.

³ See *O'Neil v. League*, 8 Ala. 345; *Bradford v. The Union Bank*, 13 Howard, 66.

to be treated as a full and correct expression of the intent, until the contrary is established beyond reasonable controversy.¹

§ 153. It has, indeed, been said, that where there is a written agreement, the whole sense of the parties is presumed to be comprised therein; that it would be dangerous to make any addition to it in cases where there does not appear to be any fraud in leaving out any thing; and that it is against the policy of the common law to allow parol evidence to add to, or vary the terms of, such an agreement.² As a general rule, there is certainly much to recommend this doctrine. But however correct it may be, as a general rule, it is very certain, that courts of equity will grant relief upon clear proof of a mistake, notwithstanding that mistake is to be made out by parol evidence.³ Lord Hardwicke, upon an occasion of this sort, said: "No doubt but this court has jurisdiction to relieve in respect of a plain mistake in contracts in writing, as well as against frauds in contracts: so that, if reduced into writing contrary to the intent of the parties, on proper proof that would be rectified."⁴ And this doctrine has been recognized upon many other occasions.⁵

¹ *Shelburne v. Inchiquin*, 1 Bro. Ch. 338, 341; *Henkle v. Royal Assurance Company*, 1 Ves. 317; *Davis v. Symonds*, 1 Cox, 404; *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 332 to 338; *Woollam v. Hearn*, 7 Ves. 217, 218; *Gillespie v. Koon*, 2 Johns. Ch. 585; *Lyman v. United Ins. Co.*, 2 Johns. Ch. 630; *Graves v. Boston Marine Ins. Co.*, 2 Cranch, 442, 444; *Clapton v. Martin*, 11 Ala. 187.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 11, and note (o); *Irnham v. Child*, 1 Bro. Ch. 2, 93; *Woollam v. Hearn*, 7 Ves. 211; *Rich v. Jackson*, 4 Bro. Parl. 514; s. c. Ves. 334, note; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 432; *Davis v. Symonds*, 1 Cox, 402, 404.

³ *Marquis of Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 332, 333; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 11; *Shelburne v. Inchiquin*, 1 Bro. Ch. 338, 350; *Simpson v. Vaughan*, 2 Atk. 31; *Wooden v. Haviland*, 18 Conn. 101; *Langley v. Brown*, 2 Atk. 203.

⁴ *Henkle v. Royal Assur. Co.*, 1 Ves. 314. See *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 332 to 339; *Shelburne v. Inchiquin*, 1 Bro. Ch. 338, 350; *Sugden on Vendors*, p. 146 to 159 (7th edit.); *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 8 Wheat. 211; s. c. 1 Peters, Sup. Ct. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*; *Motteux v. London Assur. Co.*, 1 Atk. 545; *Gillespie v. Moon*, 2 Johns. Ch. 585; *Lyman v. United Insur. Co.*, 2 Johns. Ch. 630; *Smith v. Greeley*, 4 N. H. 378; *Simpson v. Vaughan*, 2 Atk. 33; *Langley v. Brown*, 2 Atk. 203; *Burt v. Barlow*, 3 Bro. Ch. 454; 5 Ves. 595; *Irnham v. Child*, 1 Bro. Ch. 94; *Baker v. Paine*, 1 Ves. 457; *Crosby v. Middleton*, Pr. Ch. 309; *Wiser v. Blachley*, 1 Johns. Ch. 607; *South Sea Co. v. D'Oliffe*, cited 1 Ves. 317; 2 Ves. 377; 5 Ves. 601; *Pitcairne v. Ogbourne*, 2 Ves. 375; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 11, and note (o); *Mitf. Pl.* 127, 128; *Clowes v. Higginson*, 1 Ves. & Beames. 524;

§ 154. It is difficult to reconcile this doctrine with that rule of evidence at the common law, which studiously excludes the admission of parol evidence to vary or control written contracts. The same principle lies at the foundation of each class of decisions, that is to say, the desire to suppress frauds, and to promote general good faith and confidence in the formation of contracts. The danger of setting aside the solemn engagements of parties, when reduced to writing, by the introduction of parol evidence, substituting other material terms and stipulations, is sufficiently obvious.¹ But what shall be said, where those terms and stipulations are suppressed, or omitted, by fraud or imposition? Shall the guilty party be allowed to avail himself of such a triumph over innocence and credulity, to accomplish his own base designs? That would be to allow a rule, introduced to suppress fraud, to be the most effectual promotion and encouragement of it. And hence, courts of equity have not hesitated to entertain jurisdiction to reform all contracts, where a fraudulent suppression, omission, or insertion of a material stipulation exists, notwithstanding to some extent it breaks in upon the uniformity of the rule, as to the exclusion of parol evidence to vary or control contracts; wisely deeming such cases to be a proper exception to the rule, and proving its general soundness.²

§ 155. It is upon the same ground that equity interferes in cases of written agreements, where there has been an innocent

Ball v. Storie, 1 Sim. & Stu. 210; Marshall on Insurance, B. 1, ch. 8, § 1; Clinan v. Cooke, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 32, &c. See Sugden on Vendors, p. 145 159 (7th edit.); Andrews v. Essex F. & M. Insur. Co., 3 Mason, 10; Parsons v. Bignold, 13 Simons, 518.

¹ See Woollam v. Hearn, 7 Ves. 219.

² Newl. Eq. Contr. ch. 19; 1 Eq. Abridg. 20, pl. 5; Filmer v. Gott, 4 Br. Parl. Cas. 230; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 8; id. ch. 3, § 4, and note (a); Irnham v. Child, 1 Bro. Ch. 92; Portmore v. Morris, 2 Bro. Ch. 219; 1 Eq. Abridg. 19; id. 20, Agreements, B.; Hunt v. Rousmaniere, 8 Wheat. 211; s. c. 1 Peters, Sup. Ct. 13. In cases of this sort it is often said, that the admission of the parol evidence to establish fraud, or circumvention, is not so much to vary the contract as to establish something collateral to it, which shows that it ought not to be enforced. Davis v. Symonds, 1 Cox, 402, 404, 405. But in cases of mistake, the party often seeks to enforce the contract after insisting upon its being reformed. See 3 Starkie on Evid. Pt. 4, p. 1015, 1016, 1018; Pitcairn v. Ogbourne, 2 Ves. 375, 376; Baker v. Paine, 1 Ves. 456. See also Atty. Genl. v. Sitwell, Younge & Coll. 559, 582, and the remarks of Mr. Baron Alderson against the admission of parol evidence in such cases. Post, § 161 (note).

omission or insertion of a material stipulation, contrary to the intention of both parties, and under a mutual mistake. To allow it to prevail in such a case, would be to work a surprise, or fraud, upon both parties; and certainly upon the one who is the sufferer.¹ As much injustice would surely be done under such circumstances, as by a positive fraud, or an inevitable accident.² A court of equity would be of little value, if it could suppress only positive frauds, and leave mutual mistakes, innocently made, to work intolerable mischiefs, contrary to the intention of parties. It would be to allow an act, originating in innocence, to operate ultimately as a fraud, by enabling the party, who receives the benefit of the mistake, to resist the claims of justice, under the shelter of a rule framed to promote it.³ In a practical view, there would be as much mischief done by refusing relief in such cases, as there would be introduced by allowing parol evidence in all cases to vary written contracts.

§ 156. We must, therefore, treat the cases, in which equity affords relief, and allows parol evidence, to vary and reform written contracts and instruments, upon the ground of accident and mistake, as properly forming, like cases of fraud, exceptions to the general rule, which excludes parol evidence, and as standing upon the same policy as the rule itself.⁴ If the mistake should be admitted by the other side, the court would certainly not overturn any rule of equity by varying the deed; but it would be an equity *dehors* the instrument.⁵ And if it should be proved by other evidence entirely satisfactory, and equivalent to an admission, the reasons for relief would seem to be equally cogent and conclusive.⁶ It would be a great defect in the moral jurisdiction of the court,

¹ *Stone v. Hale*, 17 Ala. 562.

² *Joynes v. Statham*, 3 Atk. 389; *Ramsbottom v. Golden*, 1 Ves. & Beames, 168; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 8, note (z); *id.* § 7, note (v).

³ *Townsbend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 336, 337; *Gillespie v. Moon*, 2 Johns. Ch. 596; *Joynes v. Statham*, 3 Atk. 388; 3 Starkie, Evid. Pt. 4, p. 1018, 1019; *Pitcairne v. Ogbourne*, 2 Ves. 377, and *South Sea Company v. D'Oliffe*, there cited.

⁴ *Joynes v. Statham*, 3 Atk. 388; *Ramsbottom v. Golden*, 1 Ves. & Beam. 168; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 11, note (o); *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 129; *Cloves v. Higginson*, 1 Ves. & Beam. 526, 527; *Ball v. Storie*, 1 Sim. & Sta. 210.

⁵ *Davis v. Symonds*, 1 Cox, 404, 405.

⁶ *Irham v. Child*, 1 Bro. Ch. 92, 93.

if, under such circumstances, it were incapable of administering relief.¹

§ 157. And this remark naturally conducts us back again to the qualification of the doctrine (already stated), which is insisted upon by courts of equity. Relief will be granted in cases of written instruments, only where there is a plain mistake, clear made out by satisfactory proofs.² It is true, that this, in one sense, leaves the rule somewhat loose, as every court is still left free to say, what is a plain mistake, and what are proper and satisfactory proofs. But this is an infirmity incident to the very administration of justice, for, in many cases, judges will differ as to the result and weight of evidence; and, consequently, they may make different decisions upon the same evidence.³ But the qualification is most material, since it cannot fail to operate as a weighty caution upon the minds of all judges,⁴ and it forbids relief, whenever the evidence is loose, equivocal, or contradictory, or it is in its texture open to doubt or to opposing presumptions. [* The proof must be such as will strike all minds alike, as being unquestionable, and free from reasonable doubt. The distinction here attempted to be defined, in regard to the measure of proof is much the same which exists between civil and criminal cases; that distinction which is expressed by a fair preponderance of evidence, and full proof.⁶]

¹ See *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 336, 337; *Gillespie v. Moon*, 2 Johns. Ch. 596.

² *Gillespie v. Moon*, 2 Johns. Ch. 595 to 597; *Lyman v. United Insurance Company*, 2 Johns. Ch. 630; *Henkle v. Royal Assurance Company*, 1 Ves. 31; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 368; *id.* ch. 4, p. 490, 491; *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 328, 339.

³ See Lord Eldon's remarks in *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 333, 334.

⁴ See *Hall v. Clagett*, 2 Md. Ch. Dec. 153; [* *Leuty v. Hillas*, 2 De G. J. 110.]

⁵ Lord Thurlow, in one case, said, that the final evidence must be strong and irrefragable evidence. *Shelburne v. Inchiquin*, 1 Bro. Ch. 347. If, by this language, his lordship only meant, that the mistake should be made out by evidence clear of all reasonable doubt, its accuracy need not be questioned. But if he meant, that it should be in its nature or degree incapable of refutation, so as to be beyond any doubt and beyond controversy, the language is too general. *Attorney General v. Sitwell*, 1 Younge & Coll. 583.

⁶ [* *Tucker v. Madden*, 44 Maine, 206; *Hileman v. Wright*, 9 Ind. 11; *Linn v. Barkey*, 7 Ind. 69; *Davidson v. Greer*, 3 Sneed, 384; *Ruffner v. L. Connell*, 17 Illinois, 212.]

§ 158. Many of the cases, included under this head, come with-
in the Statute of Frauds, as it is commonly called, which requires
ce certain contracts to be in writing. But the rule, as to rejecting
parol evidence to contradict written agreements, is by no means
confined to such cases. It stands as a general rule of law, inde-
pendent of that statute.¹ It is founded upon the ground that the
written instrument furnishes better evidence of the deliberate in-
tention of the parties, than any parol proof can supply.² And the
exceptions to the rule, originating in accident and mistake, have
been equally applied to written instruments within and without
the Statute of Frauds. Thus, for instance, relief has been granted
or refused, according to circumstances, in cases of asserted mis-
takes in policies of insurance, even after a loss has taken place.³
And, in the same manner, equity has interfered in other cases of
contract, not only of a commercial nature, but of any other
nature.⁴

§ 159. The relief granted by courts of equity, in cases of this
 character, is not confined to mere executory contracts, by altering
 and conforming them to the real intent of the parties; but it is
 extended to solemn instruments, which are made by the parties,
 in pursuance of such executory or preliminary contracts. And,
 indeed, if the court acted otherwise, there would be a great defect
 of justice, and the main evils of the mistake would remain irreme-
 diable. Hence, in preliminary contracts for conveyances, settle-

¹ *Woollam v. Hearn*, 7 Ves. 218; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 11, note (v);
Clowes v. Higginson, 1 Ves. & Beames, 526; *Pitcairne v. Ogbourne*, 2 Ves.
 375; Sugden on Vendors, ch. 3, § 3; *Parteriche v. Powlet*, 2 Atk. 383, 384; 3
Starkie on Evid. Pt. 4, tit. Parol Evid. p. 995 to 1020; *Davis v. Symonds*, 1
Cox, 402, 404, 405.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Motteux v. London Assur. Co.*, 1 Atk. 545; *Henkle v. Royal Ex. Assur. Co.*,
 1 Ves. 317; *Lyman v. United Insur. Co.*, 2 Johns. Ch. 630; *Head v. Boston*
Mar. Ins. Co., 2 Cranch, 419, 444; *Marsh. Insur. B. 1, ch. 8, § 4*; *id. Andrews*
v. Essex Fire and Mar. Ins. Co., 3 Mason, 10; *Delaware Ins. Co. v. Hogan*, 2
Wash. Cir. 5.

⁴ *Baker v. Paine*, 1 Ves. 456; *Getman's Executors v. Beardsley*, 2 Johns.
 Ch. 274; *Simpson v. Vaughan*, 2 Atk. 30; *Bishop v. Church*, 2 Ves. 100, 371;
Thomas v. Frazer, 3 Ves. 399; *Finley v. Lynn*, 6 Cranch, 238; *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by*
Jeremy, 129, 130; *Pitcairne v. Ogbourne*, 2 Ves. 375, and *South Sea Company*
v. D'Olliffe, there cited, p. 377; 3 *Starkie, Evid. Pt. 4, p. 1019*; *Underhill v.*
Horwood, 10 Ves. 225, 226; *Edwin v. East India Company*, 2 Vern. 210;
Edwards v. Child, 2 Vern. 727.

ments, and other solemn instruments, the court acts efficiently by reforming the preliminary contract itself, and decreeing a due execution of it, as reformed, if no conveyance or other solemn instrument in pursuance of it has been executed. And if such conveyance or instrument has been executed, it reforms the latter also, by making it such as the parties originally intended.¹

§ 160. There is less difficulty in reforming written instruments where the mistake is mainly or wholly made out by other preliminary written instruments or memorandums of the agreement. The danger of public mischief, or private inconvenience, is less in such cases than it is in cases where parol evidence is admitted. And, accordingly, courts of equity interfere with far less scruple to correct mistakes, in the former, than in the latter. Thus, marriage settlements are often reformed, and varied, as to conform to the previous articles; and conveyances of real estate are in like manner controllable by the terms of the preliminary written contract.² Memorandums of a less formal character are

¹ See Newland on Contr. ch. 19, p. 338 to 347; Mitford Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 128, 129, 130; Sugden on Vendors, p. 146 to 159 (7th edit.); South Sea Company v. D'Oliffe, cited 2 Ves. 377; 2 Atk. 525; Henkle v. Royal Ex. Assn. Co., 1 Ves. 318, 417; Baker v. Paine, 1 Ves. 456. But see Atty. Genl. Sitwell, 1 Younge & Coll. 559, 582; *post*, § 161, p. 182, note; Hodgkinson v. Wyatt, 9 Beavan, 566.

² Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 368, 369; ch. 4, § 5, p. 490, 491; Durant v. Durant, 1 Cox, 58; Grounds and Rudim. of the Law, M. 113, p. 4 (edit. 1751); Toth. 229 [131].

³ The cases on this head are exceedingly numerous. Many of them will be found collected in Newland on Contr. ch. 19, p. 337; Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 11, 12; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 11, note (p); *id.* ch. 6, § 7, and notes; Bridg. Dig. Marriage, ii. p. 300; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 7, note (v); Chit. Eq. Dig. Settlement on Marriage, ix.; Randall v. Randall, 2 P. Will. 464; Randall v. Willis, 5 Ves. 275; West v. Erissey, 2 P. Will. 349, and Mr. Cox's note (1), p. 355; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 678 to 382; 3 Starkie, Eq. tit. Parol Evid. 10, 19; Barstow v. Kilvington, 5 Ves. 592; Rogers v. Atkins, 1 Kelly, 12, 238. In cases of marriage articles, the court will frequently give construction to the words more favorable to the presumed intent of the parties than it does in some other cases. Thus, in marriage articles, if there be a limitation to the parents for life, with remainder to the heirs of their bodies, the latter words are, in equity, generally construed to be words of purchase; and, accordingly, the court will carry such articles into effect by way of a strict settlement. Newland on Contr. ch. 19, p. 337; Fearne on Conting. Rem. p. 90 to 113 (7th edit. by Butler); 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 11, note (p); *id.* ch. 6, § 7, and notes, § 16, note (e); Randall v. Willis, 5 Ves. 275; West v. Erissey, 2 P. Will. 349; and Mr. Cox's note, *id.* (1); Heneage v. Hunloke, 2 Atk. 455, and

Also admissible for the same purpose.¹ But in all such cases it must be plainly made out, that the parties meant, in their final instruments, merely to carry into effect the arrangements designated in the prior contract or articles. For, as the parties are at liberty to vary the original agreement, if the circumstances of the case lead to the supposition that a new intent has supervened, there can be no just claim for relief upon the ground of mistake.² The very circumstance, that the final instrument of conveyance or settlement differs from the preliminary contract, affords of itself some presumption of an intentional change of purpose or agreement, unless there is some recital in it, or some other attendant circumstance, which demonstrates that it was merely in pursuance of the original contract.³ It is upon a similar ground that courts of equity, as well as courts of law, act, in holding, that where there is a written contract, all antecedent propositions, negotiations, and parol interlocutions on the same subject are to be deemed merged in such contract.⁴

§ 161. In cases of asserted mistake in written contracts, where the mistake is to be established by parol evidence, the question has often been mooted, how far a court of equity ought to be active in granting relief, by a specific performance in favor of the party, seeking to reform the contract upon such parol evidence, and to obtain performance of it, when it shall stand reformed. It is admitted that a defendant, against whom a specific performance of a written agreement is sought, may insist, by way of answer, upon the mistake, as a bar to such a bill; because he may insist

Sanders's note, *id.* 457 (1); Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 378 to 382; Taggart v. Taggart, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 84; Blackburn v. Staples, 2 V. & Beam. 368, 369; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 377, 378, 379; Harbidge v. Wogan, 5 Hare, 259.

¹ Motteux v. London Assurance Company, 1 Atk. 545; Baker v. Paine, 1 Ves. 456.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 11, note (*p*); *id.* ch. 6, § 1, 13; Legg v. Goldwire, Cas. Temp. Talb. 20; West v. Erissey, 2 P. Will. 349, and Mr. Cox's note (1), 355; Beaumont v. Bramley, 1 Turn. & Russ. 41; Hawkins v. Jackson, 2 Mac. & Gord. 372; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 379, 380; *id.* 50, 51, 52, 53; ch. 4, § 5, p. 490, 491; *id.* 1 Madd. Eq. Pr.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Rich v. Jackson, 4 Bro. Ch. 513; s. c. 6 Ves. 334, note; Pickering v. Dawson, 4 Taunt. 786; Kain v. Old, 2 B. & Cressw. 634; Parkhurst v. Van Cortlandt, 1 Johns. Ch. 273; s. c. 14 Johns. 15; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 8, 11; Davis v. Symonds, 1 Cox, 402, 404; Vandervoort v. Smith, 2 Cain. 155.

upon any matter which shows it to be inequitable to grant such relief. A court of equity is not, like a court of law, bound to enforce a written contract; but it may exercise its discretion when a specific performance is sought, and may leave the party to his remedy at law.¹ It will not, therefore, interfere to sustain a bill for a specific performance, when it would be against conscience and justice so to do. On the other hand, it seems equally clear that a party may, as plaintiff, have relief against a written contract, by having the same set aside and cancelled, or modified whenever it is founded in a mistake of material facts, and it would be unconscientious and unjust for the other party to enforce it at law or in equity.² But the case, intended to be put, differs from each of these. It is, where the party plaintiff seeks, not to set aside the agreement, but to enforce it, when it is reformed and varied by the parol evidence. A very strong inclination of opinion has been repeatedly expressed by the English courts, not to decree a specific performance in this latter class of cases; that is to say, not to admit parol evidence to establish a mistake in a written agreement, and then to enforce it, as varied and established by that evidence. On various occasions such relief has, under such circumstances, been denied.³ But it is extremely difficult to perceive the principle, upon which such decisions can be supported, consistently with the acknowledged exercise of juris-

¹ Com. Dig. Chancery, 2 C. 16; *Joynes v. Statham*, 3 Atk. 388; *Garrard v. Grinling*, 2 Swanst. 257; *Pitcairne v. Ogbourne*, 2 Ves. 375; *Legal v. Miller*, 2 Ves. 299; *Mason v. Armitage*, 13 Ves. 25; *Clark v. Grant*, 14 Ves. 519; *Hepburn v. Dunlop*, 1 Wheat. 197; *Clowes v. Higginson*, 1 Ves. & B. 524; *Winch v. Winchester*, 1 Ves. & B. 375; *Ramsbottom v. Golden*, 1 Ves. & B. 165; *Flood v. Finley*, 2 Ball & B. 53; *Clark v. Grant*, 14 Ves. 519; *Gillespie v. Moon*, 2 Johns. Ch. 585, 598; *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 328; *Price v. Dyer*, 17 Ves. 357.

² See *Ball v. Storie*, 1 Sim. & Stu. and the cases there cited.

³ See *Woollam v. Hearn*, 7 Ves. 211; *Higginson v. Clowes*, 15 Ves. 516; *Clinan v. Cooke*, 1 Sch. & Lef. 38, 39; *Clowes v. Higginson*, 1 Ves. & B. 524; *Winch v. Winchester*, 1 Ves. & B. 375; *Osborn v. Phelps*, 19 Conn. 63; *Baker v. Stow*, 2 Sandf. Ch. 298; *Miller v. Chitwood*, 1 Green, Ch. 199; *Elder v. Elder*, 10 Maine, 80; *Westbrook v. Horbesson*, 2 McCord, Ch. 112; *Clark v. Grant*, 14 Ves. 519; *Rich v. Jackson*, 6 Ves. 335; 4 Bro. Ch. 514; *Ogilvie v. Foljambe*, 3 Meriv. 53, 63; *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 328; *Jeremy v. Equity Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 432; *Clark v. Grant*, 14 Ves. 519; *Baker v. Paine*, 1 Ves. 457; *Gordon v. Hertford*, 2 Madd. 106; *Att. Gen. v. Sitwell*, 1 Younge & Coll. 559, 582; *Manser v. Back*, 6 Hare, 443.

tion in the court to reform written contracts, and to decree relief thereon.¹ In America, Mr. Chancellor Kent, after a most elaborate consideration of the subject, has not hesitated to reject

¹ Mr. Baron Alderson in *Atty. Gen. v. Sitwell* (1 Younge & Coll. 569, 582, 3) expressed a strong opinion against the reforming of a contract, and then decreeing the performance of it in equity. In that case the question was, whether by a memorandum of agreement to sell a certain manor of the crown "with the appurtenances," an advowson appurtenant or appendant thereto passed; the statute of 17 Edward II. ch. 13, having distinctly provided, that the king shall not convey an advowson without express words to that effect. Mr. Baron Alderson, in delivering his judgment, said: "The second objection is upon the terms of the contract. The plaintiffs professed to sell the manor of *Eckington* with the appurtenances'; and as the appurtenances of a manor ordinarily include an advowson appendant or appurtenant, the defendant contends, that he is not bound to take the property, unless there be a conveyance to him in the terms of the memorandum, in which the plaintiffs executed the contract; and that the crown must either give him the manor without excluding the advowson, or otherwise that the contract ought not to be performed. If the question was one between subject and subject, there would, I think, be great difficulty in decreeing the execution of the contract upon any other terms than those for which the defendant contends. It appears to me quite clear, that the memorandum of agreement would carry this advowson under the general words 'with the appurtenances.' There are various authorities to that effect; and I may more particularly refer to *Viner's Abridgment*, tit. *Prerog.* (C. c.) 9. This would have been clear, therefore, as between subject and subject. And in that case, the next question, which would have arisen, would have been, — whether or not, on the ground of mistake, one party not intending to sell, and the other not intending to purchase the advowson, I could have reformed the agreement, and have directed the specific performance of it, when so reformed. I confess I should have had great difficulty in holding that this could be done; because I cannot help feeling, that, in the case of an executory agreement, first to reform and then to decree an execution of it would be virtually to repeal the Statute of Frauds. The only ground on which I think the case could have been put would have been that the answer contained an admission of the agreement as stated in the bill; and the parties mutually agreeing that there was a mistake, the case might have fallen within the principle of those cases at law, where there is a declaration on an agreement not within the statute, and no issue taken upon the agreement by the plea; because, in such case it would seem as if, the agreement of the parties being admitted by the record, the case would no longer be within the statute. I should then have taken time to consider, whether, according to the dicta of many venerable judges, I should not have been authorized to reform an executory agreement for the conveyance of an estate, where it was admitted to have been the intention of both parties that a portion of the estate was not to pass. But in my present view of the question, it seems to me that the court ought not in any case, where the mistake is denied, or not admitted by the answer, to admit parol evidence, and upon that evidence to reform an executory agreement."

the distinction as unfounded in justice, and has decreed relief a plaintiff, standing in the precise predicament.¹

¹ Gillespie v. Moon, 2 Johns. Ch. 585; Keisselbrack v. Livingston, 4 Johr Ch. 144. [But this decision of Gillespie v. Moon has not always been follow in this country. See Osborne v. Phelps, 19 Conn. 62. See Elder v. Elder, Maine, 80; Thomas v. McCormick, 9 Dana, 108.] See also Baker v. Paine Ves. 456; Shelburne v. Inchiquin, 1 Bro. Ch. 339; Joynes v. Statbam, 3 A. 388; 6 Ves. 337, 338; Ball v. Storie, 1 Sim. & Stu. 210; Burn v. Burn, 3 V^e 573, 583; 1 Eq. Abridg. 20, Pl. 5; Sims v. Urry, 2 Ch. Cas. 225; s. c. Freeman 16; Jalabert v. Chandos, 1 Eden, 372; Pember v. Mathers, 1 Bro. Ch. Jones v. Sheriff, cited 9 Mod. 88; The Hiram, 1 Wheaton, 444; Hunt v. Re maniere, 8 Wheaton, 211; 1 Peters, Sup. C. 13; Hogan v. Delaware Insur. C 1 Wash. C. C. 422; Shelburne v. Inchiquin, 1 Bro. Ch. 338; Watkins v. W kins, 2 Atk. 98; Tilton v. Tilton, 9 N. H. 385; Tyson v. Passmore, 2 Barr, 1; Bellows v. Stone, 14 N. H. 175; Hyde v. Tanner, 1 Barb. 75; Bailey v. Bail 8 Humph. 230. But see 1 Sch. & Lefr. 39; Kekewich, Eq. Dig. Equity I. T distinction stated in the text is certainly of a very artificial character, and diffic to be reconciled with the general principles of courts of equity. It is in effect declaration, that parol evidence shall be admissible to correct a writing as *again* a plaintiff, but not in *favor* of a plaintiff, seeking a specific performance. Ther is, therefore, no mutuality or equality in the operation of the doctrine. Th ground is very clear, that a court of equity ought not to enforce a contract, wher there is a mistake against the defendant, insisting upon and establishing the mi take; for it would be inequitable and unconscientious. And if the mistake i vital to the contract, there is a like clear ground why equity should interfere s the instance of the party, as plaintiff, and cancel it; and if the mistake is parti only, why at his instance it should reform it. In these cases, the remedial justic is equal; and the parol evidence to establish it is equally open to both parties t use as proof. Why should not the party, aggrieved by a mistake in an agre ment, have relief in all cases, where he is plaintiff, as well as where he is defenc ant? Why should not parol evidence be equally admissible to establish a mistake as the foundation of relief in each case? The rules of evidence ought certainl to work equally for the benefit of each party. Mr. Chancellor Kent has forcibl observed, "That it cannot make any difference in the reasonableness and justic of the remedy, whether the mistake was to the prejudice of one party or the other. If the court has a competent jurisdiction to correct such mistakes, (and that is point understood and settled), the agreement, when corrected, and made speak the real sense of the parties, ought to be enforced, as well as any othe agreement, perfect in the first instance. It ought to have the same efficacy, a- be entitled to the same protection, when made accurate under the decree of t court, as when made accurate by the act of the parties. Res accedent lum̄ rebus." Keisselbrack v. Livingston, 4 Johns. Ch. 148, 149. [Keisselbrack Livingston has been sometimes doubted, and in 2 Eq. Lead. Cases, 552, it- said that the only way of reconciling it with principle is to look at the case, a-s would have been, had the question arisen on a bill filed by the tenant to restr- the landlord from enforcing the clause in dispute on the ground of fraud.] . may be added, that, if the doctrine be founded upon the impropriety of admil

§ 162. Courts of equity will grant relief in cases of mistake in written contracts, not only when the fact of the mistake is expressly established, but also when it is fairly implied from the nature of the transaction.¹ Thus, in cases where there has been a joint loan of money to two or more obligors, and they are by the instrument made jointly liable, but not jointly and severally, the court has reformed the bond, and made it joint and several, upon the reasonable presumption, from the nature of the transaction,² that it was so intended by the parties, and was omitted by want of skill or by mistake.³ The debt being joint, the natural, if not the irresistible, inference in such cases is, that it is intended by all the parties, that in every event the responsibility should attach to each obligor, and to all equally. This can be done only by making the bond several as well as joint; for otherwise, in case of the death of one of the obligors, the survivor or survivors only would be liable at law for the debt.⁴ Indeed, it seems now well established as a general principle, that every contract for a joint loan is in equity to be deemed, as to the parties

ing parol evidence to contradict a written agreement, that rule is not more broken in upon by the admission of it for the plaintiff, than it is by the admission of it for the defendant. If the doctrine had been confined to cases arising under the Statute of Frauds, it would, if not more intelligible, at least have been less inconvenient in practice. But it does not appear to have been thus restricted, although the cases in which it has been principally relied on have been of that description. It will often be quite as unconscientious for a defendant to shelter himself under a defence of this sort against a plaintiff seeking the specific performance of a contract, and the correction of a mistake, as it will be to enforce a contract against a defendant, which embodies a mistake to his prejudice. See *Comyns, Dig. Chancery*, 2 C. 4; 2 X. 3; 4 L. 2; *Att. Gen. v. Sitwell*, 1 *Younge & Coll.* 583. See *Chetwood v. Brittan*, 1 *Green*, Ch. 438; *Jarvis v. Palmer*, 11 *Paige*, 650; *Robeson v. Harwell* 6 *Georgia*, 589.

¹ *Wyche v. Greene*, 11 *Geo.* 172.

² See *Hyde v. Tanner*, 1 *Barb.* 84; *Barnes v. Camart*, *id.* 398.

³ *Simpson v. Vaughan*, 2 *Atk.* 31, 33; *Bishop v. Church*, 2 *Ves.* 100, 371; *Thomas v. Frazer*, 3 *Ves.* 399; *Devaynes v. Noble*, *Sleech's case*, 1 *Meriv.* 538, 539; *Sumner v. Powell*, 2 *Meriv.* 30, 35; *Hoare v. Contencin*, 1 *Bro. Ch.* 27, 29; *Ex parte Kendall*, 17 *Ves.* 519, 520; *Underhill v. Horwood*, 10 *Ves.* 209, 227; *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 8 *Wheaton*, 212, 213; *s. c.* 1 *Peters*, *Sup. Ct.* 16; *Weaver v. Shryork*, 6 *Serg. & R.* 262, 264; *Ex parte Symonds*, 1 *Cox*, 200; *Burn v. Burn*, 3 *Ves.* 573, 583; *Ex parte Bates & Henckill*, 3 *Ves.* 400, note; *Gray v. Chiswell*, 9 *Ves.* 118.

⁴ *Weaver v. Shryork*, 6 *Serg. & R.* 262, 264; *Gray v. Chiswell*, 9 *Ves.* 118; *Ex parte Kendall*, 17 *Ves.* 525.

borrowing, a joint and several contract, whether the transaction be of a mercantile nature or not; for in every such case it may fairly be presumed to be the intention of the parties, that the creditor should have the several, as well as the joint, security of all the borrowers for the repayment of the debt.¹ Hence, if one of the borrowers should die, the creditor has a right to proceed for immediate relief out of the assets of the deceased party without claiming any relief against the surviving joint contractors, and without showing that the latter are unable to pay by reason of their insolvency.²

§ 163. But where the inference of a joint original debt or liability is repelled, a court of equity will not interfere; for in such a case, there is no ground to presume any mistake.³ This doctrine has been very clearly expounded by Sir William Grant. "When" (says he) "the obligation exists only in virtue of the covenant, its extent can be measured only by the words in which it is conceived. A partnership debt has been treated in equity as the several debt of each partner, although at law it is only the joint debt of all.⁴ But, there, all the partners have had a benefit from the money advanced, or the credit given; and the obligation of all to pay exists, independently of any instrument, by which the debt may have been secured. So, where a joint bond has in equity been considered as several, there has been a credit previously given to the different persons who have entered into the obligation. It is not the bond that first created the liability."⁵

§ 164. It is upon the same ground, that a court of equity will not reform a joint bond against a mere surety, so as to make it several against him, upon the presumption of a mistake from the nature of the transaction; but it will require positive proof of an express agreement by him, that it should be several as well as

¹ *Thorpe v. Jackson*, 2 *Younge & Coll.* 553; *Wilkinson v. Henderson*, 1 *Mylne & Keen*, 582. But see *Richardson v. Horton*, 6 *Beavan*, 185.

² *Ibid.* But in all such cases the surviving partners are properly to be made parties, as they have a right to contest the demand, and are interested in taking the account. *Ibid.*

³ See *Hunt v. Rousmaniere*, 8 *Wheat.* 212, 213, 214; s. c. 1 *Peters, Sup. Ct.* 16. See *Richardson v. Horton*, 6 *Beavan*, 185.

⁴ *Post*, § 676.

⁵ *Sumner v. Powell*, 2 *Meriv.* 35, 36. See also *Underhill v. Horwood*, 10 *Ves.* 227; *Thorpe v. Jackson*, 2 *Younge & Coll.* 553; *Ex parte Kendall* 17 *Ves.* 525; *Cowell v. Sykes*, 2 *Russ.* 191.

int.¹ [So where an obligee of a joint and several bond elected take a joint judgment against all the obligors, and thus at law st his right of a several remedy, a court of equity refused him remedy against the personal assets of a deceased obligor, who as only a surety.²] And in other cases, where the obligation or covenant is purely matter of arbitrary convention, not growing out of any antecedent liability in all or any of the obligors or covenanters to do what they have undertaken (as, for example, a bond or covenant of indemnity for the acts or debts of third persons), a court of equity will not by implication extend the responsibility from that of a joint to a joint and several undertaking.³ But if there be an express agreement to the effect that an obligation or other contract shall be joint and several, or to any other effect, and it is omitted by mistake in the instrument, a court of equity will, under such circumstances, grant relief as fully against surety or guarantee, as against the principal party.⁴

[* § 164 a. So also will courts of equity decree the surrender of a bond to be cancelled, where it has not been executed by all who were expected to become jointly bound, as co-sureties. As where the creditor had prepared the deed, so as to show on the face of it, that it was intended to contain a joint and several covenant by two co-sureties, and had sent it in that form to be executed by one of such sureties, but had not procured the execution of it by the other, and had not informed the surety, who had executed it, of this fact; but on the contrary had afterwards written to him as "one of the sureties," the principal debtor having become insolvent; it was held, that the surety who had executed the instrument was, in equity, entitled to be relieved from all

¹ Ibid.; *Weaver v. Shryork*, 6 Serg. & R. 262, 264, 265.

² [*United States v. Price*, 9 Howard, U. S. 83.] [* Where the general subject is extensively discussed and the cases reviewed by Mr. Justice Grier, see *Wright v. Russell*, 3 Wilson, 530; *Waters v. Riley*, 2 Har. & G. 310; *Harrison Field*, 2 Washington, Va. 136; *Weaver v. Shryork*, 6 S. & R. 262; *Kennedy v. Carpenter*, 2 Whar. 361; *United States v. Cushman*, 2 Sumner, 426; *Higgins's case*, 6 Coke, 44; *Lechmere v. Fletcher*, 1 Cr. & Mees. 623; *Sheehy v. Mandeville*, 6 Cranch, 253.]

³ *Sumner v. Powell*, 2 Meriv. 30, 35, 36; *Harrison v. Mirge*, 2 Wash. 136; *Vard v. Webber*, 1 Wash. 274; *Thomas v. Frazer*, 3 Ves. 399, 402; *Burn v. Burn*, 3 Ves. 573, 582; *Richardson v. Horton*, 6 Beavan, 186.

⁴ Ibid.; *Wiser v. Blachley*, 1 Johns. Ch. 607; *Crosby v. Middleton*, Prec. Ch. 309; s. c. 2 Eq. Abridg. 188 F.; *Berg v. Radcliffe*, 6 Johns. Ch. 302, 307, &c.; *Rawstone v. Parr*, 3 Russell, 424; s. c. id. 539.

liability upon it.¹ The relief is granted not upon the ground of controlling the written contract by parol proof, but there being a condition precedent to the contract taking effect, and that not being performed, the deed never took effect, there having been no complete delivery.²

§ 164 *b*. In applications to rectify a settlement, or to reform any contract, on the ground of mistake, the question to be considered is, not what the parties would have done, had they been able to anticipate subsequent developments; but what was their intention at the time the contract was executed.³ And in suits to reform written contracts, where no written instructions were given as to the preparation of the writings, parol evidence will be received as to the intention of the parties.⁴

§ 164 *c*. Courts of equity will sometimes annex conditions to decrees in regard to reforming contracts, not in the contemplation of the parties at the time of entering into the contract. As where, by mistake, in drawing up a lease of premises, the rent was stated at a lower rate than that stipulated by the parties; and the lessee had entered into possession. Upon a bill to set the matter right, the court gave the lessee an election to continue the tenancy, at the higher rate, or abandon and pay for use and occupation during her occupancy, at the higher rate, being compensated for all repairs of a permanent character, but not for the expense of taking possession of the house and establishing herself there in business. It was also held that the lessor was responsible to refund the money advanced to the lessee upon the security of the lease, with costs; the lessee being liable over to the lessor for payment of the same; on the ground that if the lease was rejected, the premises must stand as security for the money so advanced; and if the lease was accepted, it was primarily liable for the payment of the same to the lessor.⁵

§ 164 *d*. The court will not reform a deed on petition or motion, but only upon regular bill for that purpose, wherein the proposed alteration is distinctly set forth; and until the deed is reformed

¹ [* *Evans v. Bremridge*, 2 Kay & J. 174; *Keith v. Goodwin*, 31 Verm. 268.

² *Black v. Lamb*, 1 Beasley, Ch. 108. So equity will correct the mistake of the scrivener. *Clemmons v. Drew*, 2 Jones, Eq. 314.

³ *Wilkinson v. Nelson*, 7 Jur. n. s. 480; s. c. 9 W. R. 398.

⁴ *Lackersteen v. Lackersteen*, 6 Jur. n. s. 1111; s. c. 30 L. J. n. s. Ch. 5. As to admission of parol evidence see *Company v. Perley*, 46 N. H. 83.

⁵ *Garrard v. Frankel*, 8 Jur. n. s. 985; s. c. 30 Beav. 445.

the court is bound to act upon it as it exists, although fully satisfied that it is at variance with the intention of the parties.¹ And it is also essential to a decree, reforming a deed or written contract, that the extent of the proposed alteration should be clearly defined, and ascertained by evidence contemporaneous with, or anterior to, the deed or writing.² But a deed may be reformed so as to be confined to the object intended, where its operation, as it stands, is doubtful.³

§ 164 e. The courts of equity will not rectify a voluntary deed, unless all the parties consent. If any object, the deed must take its chance as it stands.⁴ Where a contract in writing is different from the understanding of either party, and the parties did not understand the case alike, so that their minds never in fact met, there was no valid agreement, and the courts of equity will set the written contract aside, as being wholly void.⁵

§ 164 f. Where a deed of conveyance upon consideration is made, through want of skill in the scrivener, to convey a greater privilege in regard to sea-weed than the parties embraced in their contract, a court of equity will reform the instrument. But where the vendor had misrepresented the extent and value of the privilege proposed to be conveyed, and the mistake of the scrivener had only brought the deed up to the value of the privilege as represented by the grantor at the time of the conveyance, the court declined to interfere.⁶ The recent cases, upon this general head of reforming contracts and instruments in writing, which fail to meet the justice of the relation intended to be established between the parties are so numerous, that it could scarcely be expected to embrace any large proportion of them in a work of this kind. We have referred to those which appear to present the question in any new phase in the subjoined note.⁷

¹ *Malet in re*, 8 Jur. N. S. 226; s. c. 31 L. J. N. S. Ch. 455.

² *Bradford v. Romney*, 6 Law T. N. S. 208; s. c. 30 Beav. 431.

³ *Walker v. Armstrong*, 8 De G., M. & G. 531.

⁴ *Broun v. Kennedy*, 9 Jur. N. S. 1163; s. c. 33 Beav. 133. It was said in this case, that a deed by which a client, immediately after recovering certain property, makes a gift of part of that property, by way of recompense, to a barrister who had acted in recovering it, cannot be maintained.

⁵ *Price v. Ley*, 9 Jur. N. S. 295; s. c. 4 Giff. 235.

⁶ *Allen v. Brown*, 6 R. I. 386.

⁷ *Comstock, Ch. J. in New York Ice Co. v. N. W. Ins. Co.*, 23 N. Y. 357; *Carter v. Barnes*, 26 Ill. 454. Will not be done as against a married wo-

§ 164 *g*. There can be no doubt of the general right of courts of equity to correct mistakes which have occurred in the sale of land, by reforming the conveyance to meet the purposes of the parties. But when a deed is drawn strictly in accordance with the intention of the parties, although from want of knowledge or skill, it will not effect the end proposed, there is no case presented for the interference of the court.¹

164 *h*. This subject is somewhat commented upon by the present Lord Chancellor, Hatherby, then Vice-Chancellor Wood, in the case of *Druiff v. Parker*,² where the plaintiff's agent had, by mistake, inserted the plaintiff's name in a bill of exchange, intended to be drawn in her favor, just above that of the drawer, whereby the plaintiff met with embarrassment in proceeding in a suit at law, and appealed to the Court of Equity for relief. The learned judge fully recognized the doctrines laid down in this chapter upon the subject of the jurisdiction for reforming written instruments being exclusively confined to the courts of equity. But his lordship suggested that some anomalies naturally resulted from this attempt to separate the jurisdiction of the courts of law and equity upon this subject.]

§ 165. In all cases of mistake in written instruments, courts of equity will interfere only as between the original parties, or those claiming under them in privity; such as personal representatives, heirs, devisees, legatees, assignees, voluntary grantees,³ or judgment creditors,⁴ or purchasers from them, with notice of the facts.⁵ As against *bonâ fide* purchasers for a valuable consideration without

man. *Grapengether v. Fejervary*, 9 Iowa, 163. The proof must be unquestionable. *Lake v. Meacham*, 13 Wis. 355; *Fowler v. Adams*, id. 458. Relief from contract on the ground of fraudulent practices. *Hager v. Thomson*, 1 Black, 80; *Lloyd v. Higbee*, 25 Ill. 603.

¹ *Durant v. Bacot*, 2 Beasley, 201.

² Law Rep. 5 Eq. 131. As to the right to contradict recitals in a deed of indemnity on the ground that they do not create any equitable estoppels, see *Brooke v. Haymes*, Law Rep. 6 Eq. 25. See also *In re Tottenham's Estate*, Ir. Law Rep. 2 Eq. 375; *Beauchamp v. Winn*, 17 W. R. 866; L. R. 4 Ch. App. 567; *Neil v. Midland Railw. Co.* 17 W. R. 871; *Woollaston v. Tribe*, 18 W. R. 83.]

³ See *Wyche v. Green*, 11 Geo. 173.

⁴ *Wall v. Arrington*, 13 Geo. 93; *White v. Wilson*, 6 Blackf. 448; *Stone v. Hale*, 17 Ala. 564.

⁵ *Warrick v. Warrick*, 3 Atk. 293; Com. Dig. Chancery, 2 C. 2; 4 J. 4; *Whitehead v. Brown*, 18 Ala. 682.

Notice, courts of equity will grant no relief; because they have, at least, an equal equity to the protection of the court.¹

§ 166. In like manner as equity will grant relief in cases of mistake in written instruments, to prevent manifest injustice and wrong, and to suppress fraud, it will also grant relief and supply defects, where, by mistake, the parties have omitted any acts or circumstances necessary to give due validity and effect to written instruments. Thus, equity will supply any defect of circumstances in conveyances, occasioned by mistake; as of livery of seisin in the passing of a freehold; or of a surrender in case of a copyhold, or the like; so also misprisions and omissions in deeds, awards, and other solemn instruments, whereby they are defective at law.² It will also interfere in cases of mistake in judgments, and other matters of record, injurious to the rights of the party.³

§ 167. The same principle applies to cases where an instrument has been delivered up, or cancelled, under a mistake of the party, and in ignorance of the facts material to the rights derived under it. A court of equity will in such cases grant relief, upon the ground, that the party is conscientiously entitled to enforce such rights; and that he ought to have the same benefit as if the instrument were in his possession with its entire original validity.⁴ [* This rule was very recently applied to the case of a surety, who had innocently obtained his release through the fraud of the principal.⁵]

§ 168. And, for the same reason, equity will give effect to the

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, and notes; id. ch. 3, § 11, note; Newland on Contracts, 344, 345; Davis v. Thomas, Sugden on Vend. ch. 3, p. 143, 159 (7th edit.); Warrick v. Warrick, 3 Atk. 290, 293; Malden v. Menill, 2 Atk. 13; West v. Erissey, 2 P. Will. 349; Powell v. Price, 2 P. Will. 535; Whitman v. Weston, 30 Maine, 285; ante, § 64 c, 108, 139; post, § 381, 409, 434, 436; Ligon v. Rogers, 12 Geo. 292.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7; id. ch. 3, § 1, and the cases there cited; id. ch. 2, § 7, and notes; Grounds and Rudim. of the Law, M. 112, p. 81 (edit. 1751); Com. Dig. Chancery, Z; Kekewick, Dig. Chan. Equity I.; Newland on Contracts, ch. 19, p. 342 to 350; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 367, 368, 369; id. ch. 4, § 5, p. 489, 490, 494, 495; Thorne v. Thorne, 1 Vern. 141; Com. Dig. Chancery, 2 T. 1, to 2 T. 7; 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 42; id. 55, 65; Fothergill v. Fothergill, 2 Freeman, 256, 257.

³ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 5, p. 492; Barnesley v. Powell, 1 Ves. 119, 284, 289; Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 W.

⁴ East India Co. v. Donald, 9 Ves. 275; East India Co. v. Neave, 5 Ves. 173.

⁵ [* Scholefield v. Templer, Johnson (Eng. Ch.), 155.]

real intentions of the parties, as gathered from the objects of the instrument, and the circumstances of the case, although the instrument may be drawn up in a very inartificial and untechnical manner. For, however just in general the rule may be, "Quoties in verbis nulla est ambiguitas, ibi nulla expositio contra verba expressa fienda est;"¹ yet that rule shall not prevail to defeat the manifest intent and object of the parties, where it is clearly discernible on the face of the instrument, and the ignorance or blunder or mistake of the parties has prevented them from expressing it in the appropriate language.² Thus, if one in consideration of natural love should execute a feoffment, or a lease and release, or a bargain and sale, it would, notwithstanding the use of the technical words, be held to operate as a covenant to stand seised.³ And the same rule would be applied, if, under the like circumstances, instead of the words "bargain and sell," the words "give and grant," or "enfeoff, alien, and confirm," should be used in a deed.⁴

§ 169. There is also another marked instance of the application of the remedial authority of courts of equity; that is, to the execution of powers. In no case will equity interfere where there has been a non-execution of a power, as contradistinguished from a trust;⁵ for if a trust be coupled with a power, there (as we shall presently see)⁶ the trust will be enforced, notwithstanding the

¹ Co. Litt. 147 a.

² Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 367, 368; *Smith v. Packhurst*, 3 Atk. 136; *Stapilton v. Stapilton*, 1 Atk. 8; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 11, 13, and note (d); id. § 18, and note (e); id. § 18, and note (n); *Alexander v. Newton*, 2 Gratt. 266.

³ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, p. 367, 368; *Thompson v. Attfield*, 1 Vern. 40; *Stapilton v. Stapilton*, 1 Atk. 8; *Thorne v. Thorne*, 1 Vern. 141; *Brown v. Jones*, 1 Atk. 190, 191.

⁴ Jeremy, *ibid.*; *Harrison v. Austin*, 3 Mod. 237. The same point was recognized in *Doungsworth v. Blair*, 1 Keen, 795, 801, where the master of the rolls said: "An indenture, which is intended to be an indenture of release, but cannot operate as such, may for the purpose of carrying into effect the intention of the parties, and if there be a proper consideration, be construed as a covenant to stand seised."

⁵ See *Brown v. Higgs*, 8 Ves. 570; *Holmes v. Coghill*, 7 Ves. 499; s. c. 13 Ves. 206; *Tollett v. Tollett*, 2 P. Will. 489; 1 *White and Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cases*, 208 and notes; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, note (v); id. ch. 4, § 25, note (h) and (k); Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 376, 377; *Sugden on Powers*, ch. 6, § 3; *post*, § 176, note.

⁶ *Post*, § 176, and note; *Burrough v. Philcox*, 5 Mylne & Craig, 73, 92.

force of the power does not execute it. But, if there be a defective execution, or attempt at execution of a mere power, there equity will interpose, and supply the defect, not universally, indeed, but in favor of parties for whom the person intrusted with the execution of the power is under a moral or legal obligation to provide an execution of the power. Thus, such a defective execution will be aided in favor of persons standing upon a valuable or a meritorious consideration; such as a *bona fide* purchaser for a valuable consideration, a creditor, a wife, and a legitimate child;¹ unless, indeed, such aid of the defective execution would, under the circumstances, be inequitable to other persons; or it is repelled by some counter equity.² Indeed, if a general power to raise money for any purposes be given, so that the donee of the power may, if he choose, execute it in his own favor, and he should execute it in favor of mere volunteers, there a court of equity will, in favor of creditors, deem the money assets against the volunteers, upon the ground that the donee of the power has an absolute dominion over the power and the property.³

§ 170. The reason for this distinction, between the non-execution of a power and the defective execution of it, has been stated with great clearness and precision by a learned judge. "The difference" (he said) "is betwixt a non-execution and a defective execution of a power. The latter will always be aided in equity under the circumstances mentioned; it being the duty of every man to pay his debts, and of a husband or father to provide for his wife or child. But this court will not help the non-execution of a power, which is left to the free will and election of the party, whether to execute or not; for which reason equity will not say we shall execute it; or do that for him which he does not think fit to do for himself."⁴ Indeed, a court of equity, by acting

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, note (v); id. ch. 4, § 25, and notes (h), (i), (m); id. ch. 5, § 2, and notes; *Fothergill v. Fothergill*, 2 Freem. 256, 257; Com. Dig. Chan. 4 H. 1 to 4 H. 4: 4 H. 6; Gilbert, *Lex Prætoria*, p. 300 to 306; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 372.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, and note (v).

³ *Post*, § 176, and note.

⁴ The master of the rolls, in *Tollett v. Tollett*, 2 P. Will. 490. See also *Lassells v. Cornwallis*, 2 Vern. 465; *Crossling v. Crossling*, 2 Cox, 396; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, and notes; id. ch. 1, § 7, and notes; *Sugden on Powers*, ch. 6, § 3, p. 315. Sir William Grant, in *Holmes v. Coghill* (7 Ves. 506), and Lord Erskine, in the same case on appeal (12 Ves. 212), have expressed dissat-

otherwise in the case of a non-execution of a power, would, in effect, deprive the party of all discretion as to the exercise of it; is a satisfaction with this distinction, as not quite consistent with the principles of law or equity, though fully established by authority. The former, in reasoning on the case of a power to charge an estate with £2,000 by deed, or will, which had not been executed, and of which creditors sought the benefit, as if executed, said: "To say, that, without a deed or will, this sum shall be raised, is to subject the owner of the estate to a charge in a case in which he never consented to bear it. The chance that it may never be executed, or that it may not be executed in the manner prescribed, is an advantage he secures to himself by the agreement, and which no one has a right to take from him. In this respect, there is no difference between a non-execution and a defective execution of a power. By the compact the estate ought not to be charged in either case. It is difficult, therefore, to discover a sound principle for the authority this court assumes, for aiding a defective execution, in certain cases. If the intention of the party possessing the power is to be regarded, and not the interest of the party to be affected by the execution, that intention ought to be executed, wherever it is manifested; for the owner of the estate has nothing to do with the purpose. To him it is indifferent whether it is to be exercised for a creditor or a volunteer. But if the interest of the party to be affected by the execution is to be regarded, why in any case exercise the power, except in the form and manner prescribed? He is an absolute stranger to the equity between the possessor of the power and the party in whose favor it is intended to be executed. As against the debtor, it is right that he should pay. But what equity is there for the creditor to have the money raised out of the estate of a third person, in a case in which it was never agreed that it should be raised? The owner is not heard to say, it will be a grievous burden, and of no merit or utility. He is told the case provided for exists; it is formally right; he has nothing to do with the purpose. But upon a defect, which this court is called upon to supply, he is not permitted to retort this argument; and to say it is not formally right; the case provided for does not exist; and he has nothing to do with the purpose. In the sort of equity upon this subject there is some want of equality. But the rule is perfectly settled; and, though perhaps with some violation of principle, with no practical inconvenience." There is much strength in this reasoning; but after all, it is open to some question. The party possessing the power intends to execute it; he proceeds to do an act which he supposes to be a perfect act of execution. He possesses the right to do it in a formal manner; he has failed, by mistake, against his intention. But the objects, in whose favor it is to be executed, possess a high, moral, and equitable claim for its execution. Under such circumstances, why should a mere mistake, contrary to the intention, defeat the bounty, or the justice of the possessor of the power? If the case were one of an absolute property in the party, a court of equity would not fail to correct the mistake in favor of persons having such merits. Why should it hesitate, when the possessor of the power has done an act, intended to reduce it to the case of absolute property? There is no countervailing equity in such a case in favor of the other side. The case stands dryly upon a mere point of strict law. The difficulty in the argument is, that it deals with the power as a mere naked authority to act, with-

nd would thus overthrow the very intention manifested by the parties in the creation of the power. On the contrary, when the party undertakes to execute a power, but, by mistake, does it imperfectly, equity will interpose to carry his very intention into effect, and that, too, in aid of those who are peculiarly within its protective favor; that is, creditors, purchasers, wives, and children.¹

[* § 170 a. The discussion which appears, by the last section and the notes, to have taken place, first and last, upon the reason for the interference of a court of equity, to cure the defective execution, but not the non-execution of a power, may justify the suggestion here, that it very obviously rests upon the fact, that all voluntary powers are dependent, for their execution, upon the will of the appointee. Until that occurs, no right is perfected in those who are to be benefited by its execution. And a court of equity will not attempt to exercise this discretion for the party. But when all has been done to perfect the right, except a mere formal omission in the instrument, courts of equity interfere to supply the defect, upon the principle of reforming instruments, and correcting mistakes, generally, for the purpose of preventing fraud and injustice, of which the party would be guilty, by claiming a benefit, under a mere mistake. And the reason why the courts of equity will not supply a defective execution of a power, except in favor of persons standing in a meritorious relation to the power, such as creditors, purchasers, wives, and children, is referable to the general ground upon which courts of equity decline to interfere by way of decreeing specific performance in favor of a mere volunteer, choosing rather, where the equities between the parties are equal, to leave them to their legal remedies.²

But considering, that when the party elects to act, an interest attaches to him in the execution of the power; and that the election thus made is defeated, and the interest thus created fails, by mere mistake, from the defective execution, against parties standing on a strong equity, and in favor of others having none. See 1 Conbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25.

¹ *Moodie v. Reid*, 1 Mad. 516; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, p. 169, 370, 371, 372, 375*; *Darlington v. Pulteney*, Cowp. 266, 267; *Ellis v. Nimmo*, Lloyd & Goold's Rep. 348. There seems a distinction in this respect between cases of the defective execution of powers, and cases of voluntary contracts, covenants, and settlements, of which specific performance is sought. See *Jefferys v. Jefferys*, 1 Craig & Phillips, 138, 141; *post*, § 433, note; 706, 706 a, 787, 793 b, 973, 987, 1040 b.

² [*This is very obvious, from courts of equity treating any expression, in

§ 170 *b*. It was decided in a recent case,¹ that equity will interfere to reform the execution of a power of appointment, by the insertion of a hotchpot clause, the court being satisfied by the evidence, that it was the intention of the donee of the power to produce equality, and that the clause had been omitted by mistake.]

§ 171. What shall constitute an execution, or preparatory steps or attempts towards the execution of a power, entitling the party to relief in equity, on the ground of a defective execution, has been largely and liberally interpreted. It is clear that it is not sufficient that there should be a mere floating and indefinite intention to execute the power, without some steps taken to give it a legal effect.² Some steps must be taken, or some acts done, with this sole and definite intention, and be such as are properly referable to the power.³ Lord Mansfield, at one time, contended, that whatever is an equitable, ought to be deemed a legal, execution of a power, because there should be a uniform rule of property; and that, if courts of equity would presume that a strict adherence to the precise form, pointed out in the creation of the power, was not intended, and therefore not necessary, the same rule should prevail at law.⁴ But this doctrine has been overruled. And indeed, courts of equity do not deem the power well executed unless the form is adhered to; but in cases of a meritorious consideration they supply the defect.⁵

§ 172. And relief will be granted, not only when the defect arises from an informal instrument, not within the scope of the power, but also when the defect arises from the improper execution of the appropriate instrument. All that is necessary is, that the intention to execute the power should clearly appear in writing. Thus, if the donee of a power merely covenant to execute it; or, by his will, desire the remainder-man to create the estate; or enter into a contract, not under seal, to execute the power; or by letters promise to grant an estate, which he can execute only writing, by the appointee, of a wish to have the power executed as a sufficient ground to justify the interference of the court. *Post*, § 172 and notes.

¹ *Wilkinson v. Nelson*, 7 Jur. n. s. 480; s. c. 9 W. R. 393.]

² See 2 *Chance on Powers*, ch. 23, § 3, art. 3005, 3011; *Barr v. Hatch*, 3 Ohio, 527.

³ See *Sugden on Powers*, ch. 6, § 2.

⁴ *Darlington v. Pulteney*, Cowper, 267.

⁵ *Sugden on Powers*, ch. 6, § 1, p. 344; *id.* § 359; *id.* § 361 to 370.

by the instrumentality of the power; in all these, and the like cases, equity will supply the defect.¹ And even an answer to a bill in equity, stating that the party does appoint, and intends by a writing in due form to appoint the fund, will be an execution of the power for this purpose.²

§ 173. The like rule prevails, where the instrument selected is not that prescribed by the power; provided it is not in its own nature repugnant to the true object of the creation of the power. Thus, if the power ought to be executed by a deed, but it is executed by a will, the defective execution will be aided.³ But, if the power ought to be executed by a will, and the donee of the power should execute a conveyance of the estate by an absolute deed, it will be invalid; because such a conveyance, if it avail to any purpose, must avail to the immediate destruction of the power, since it would no longer be revocable, as a will would be. The intention of the power, in its creation, was to reserve an entire control over its execution, until the moment of the death of the donee; and this intention would be defeated by any other instrument than a will.⁴ An act done, not strictly according to the terms of the power, but consistent with its intent, may be upheld in equity. But an act, which violates the very purpose for which the power was created, and the very control over it, which it meant to vest in the donee, is repugnant to it, and cannot be deemed, in any just sense, to be an execution of it.⁵

§ 174. But in other respects there is no difference between a defective execution of a power by a will and by a deed; for in each case the remedial interposition of equity will be applied. Thus, if a power is required to be executed in the presence of three witnesses, and it is executed in the presence of two only, equity will interfere in such a case. So, if the instrument, whether it be a deed or a will, is required to be signed and sealed, and it is without seal or signature, equity will relieve.⁶ [But equity will not

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Carter v. Carter*, Moseley, 365.

³ *Smith v. Ashton*, 1 Freeman, 308; s. c. 1 Ch. Cas. 269; Sugden on Powers, ch. 6 (4th edit.), p. 362 to 367; *Tollett v. Tollett*, 2 P. Will. 489; 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 1, p. 507, 508; *id.* 513 to 516; Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 H. 6.

⁴ *Reid v. Shergold*, 10 Ves. 378, 380.

⁵ See *Bainbridge v. Smith*, 8 Sim. 86; *ante*, § 97.

⁶ Sugden on Powers, ch. 6 (4th edit.), p. 369, 370; 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, p. 507 to 510; *Wade v. Paget*, 1 Bro. Ch. 363.

relieve in case of a deed given by an attorney, who, however, has no power under seal; for this is the case of a defective power, and not of a defective execution of power.¹] And where a power is required to be executed by a will by way of appointment, there the appointment will be aided, although the will is not duly executed according to the Statute of Frauds; for it takes effect, not under the will, but under the instrument creating the power.² Equity will also, in many cases, grant relief, where, by mistake, a different kind of estate or interest is given from that which is authorized by the power, or where there is an excess of the power.³

[* § 174 *a*. But where one had a power to appoint "by his will, or any writing in the nature of or purporting to be his will, or any codicil thereto"; and, on his death, the third and fourth sheets of a will were alone discovered, and which were in his handwriting and signed by him, and were attested by two witnesses, and one of them contained a perfect appointment, probate having been refused; it was held, that equity could not regard this as a valid execution of the power.⁴ But, in general, courts of equity feel it a duty to support a power, if possible, and to give effect to its execution, if there is no defect of substance; and it is not exercised from im-

¹ Piatt v. McCullough, 1 McLean, 69. See Thorp v. McCallum, 1 Gilm. 615

² Wilkie v. Holme, 1 Dick. 165; Coventry v. Coventry, 9 Mod. 13, 18; Shannon v. Bradstreet, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 60; Sugden on Powers, ch. 6 (4th edit.), p. 362 to 367; 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 1, p. 507, 508. But see Gilb. Lex Prætoria, p. 301; Duff v. Dalzell, 1 Bro. Ch. 147; Wagstaff v. Wagstaff, 2 P. Will. 259, 260; Longford v. Eyre, 1 P. Will. 741; Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 H. 7. Where an attempt is made to execute a power by a will (the power authorizing an execution by will) and the will is left imperfect, the same reason does not seem to exist, as may in other cases, to carry it into effect; for it may have been thus left intentionally imperfect, from a change of purpose. Lord Eldon, in remarking upon the difficulties of some of the cases, has said: "If, in the instance of a want of a surrender of copyhold estate, the circumstance of the devise being to a child is considered, the more natural conclusion is, that the testator, whatever his purpose was, going only so far towards it, and not proceeding to make it effectual, had dropped it. So the attempt to execute a power is no more than an intimation that the party means to execute it. But if all the requisite ceremonies have not been complied with, it cannot be supposed that the intention continued until his death." Finch v. Finch, 15 Ves. 51.

³ Sugden on Powers, ch. 6, § 1, art. 2; id. ch. 9, § 8, art. 2; 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 7, p. 610, 613; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 373, 374.

⁴ [* Gullan v. Grove, 26 Beavan, 64. See Pomfret v. Perring, 5 De G., M. & G. 775.

proper motives or for improper objects.¹ And where the intention to pass the property comprised in the power is clearly established, the court will give effect to the intention, although there is no intention expressed to act in execution of the power.²

§ 174 *b*. Where the testator, by his will, gave his wife several powers of appointment, one by deed or will, and others by "deed or deeds, instrument or instruments, in writing, sealed and delivered"; and she executed a deed of appointment, reciting only the power by "deed or deeds," &c., which included only that particular estate, it was held that this estate was well appointed, but that the appointment did not extend to any others. And the same person having afterwards, by will, appointed the same estate, it was held not to revoke the former appointment by deed, but to be wholly inoperative.³

§ 175. In all these cases it is to be understood that the intention and objects of the power are not defeated or put aside; but that they are only attempted by the party to be carried formally into effect. But where there is a defect of substance in the execution of the power, such as the want of co-operation of all the proper parties in the act, there equity will not aid the defect.⁴

§ 176. But in all these cases of relief by aiding and correcting defects or mistakes in the execution of instruments and powers, the party asking relief must stand upon some equity superior to that of the party against whom he asks it. If the equities are equal, a court of equity is silent and passive.⁵ Thus, equity will not relieve one person, claiming under a voluntary defective conveyance, against another, claiming also under a voluntary conveyance; but will leave the parties to their rights at law.⁶ For,

¹ *Carver v. Richards*, 6 Jur. n. s. 410; s. c. 8 W. R. 349.

² s. c. 5 Jur. n. s. 1412.

³ *Cooper v. Martin*, 12 Jur. n. s. 887; 15 W. R. 5.]

⁴ See 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 2, p. 540 to 543; Com. Dig. Chancery, l. 7.

See Sugden on Powers, ch. 6 (4th edit.), p. 353, 358; 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 1, p. 502, 504, 507. [* *Anderson v. Tydings*, 8 Md. 427; *Smith v. Martine*, 2 Jones, Eq. 253.]

1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, and notes; id. ch. 4, § 25, and notes; id. ch. 2, and notes; *Goodwin v. Goodwin*, 1 Rep. Chan. 92 [173]; Mitf. Eq. Pl. Remy, 274; *Moodie v. Reid*, 1 Mad. 516; 1 Mad. Eq. Pr. 45, 46, 47; Sugden on Powers, ch. 6 (4th edit.), p. 353 to 358; 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 1, p. 502, 504, 507; Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 H. 9, 2 T. 9, 2 T. 10, 2 C. 8, 4 post, § 433, 706 a, 787, 793 a, 793 b, 973, 987. There is one peculiarity

regularly, equity is remedial to those only who come in upon an actual consideration; and, therefore, there should be some consideration, equitable or otherwise, express or implied.¹ But there are excepted cases, even from this rule; for a defective execution has been aided in favor of a volunteer, where a strict compliance with the power has been impossible from circumstances beyond the control of the party; as where the prescribed witnesses could not be found; or where an interested party, having possession of the deed, creating the power, has kept it from the sight of the party, executing the power, so that he could not ascertain the formalities required.²

§ 177. For the same reason equity will not supply a surrender, or aid the defective execution of a power, to the disinheritance of the heir-at-law. Neither will it supply such a surrender in favor of creditors, where there are, otherwise, assets sufficient to pay

as to the execution of powers, which may be here taken notice of, although, for obvious reasons, this is not the place to discuss the nature and effects of powers generally. It is this: If a party possesses a general power to raise money for any purposes, so that, if he pleases, he may execute it in his own favor, and he executes it in favor of mere volunteers; in such a case, it will be deemed assets in favor of creditors, upon the ground of his absolute dominion over the power. But if he does not execute the power at all, there, equity will not deem it assets. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, note (c); id. § 25, note (n); *Harrington v. Harte*, 1 Cox, 1.1; *Townsend v. Windham*, 2 Ves. 1; *Troughton v. Troughton*, 3 A. tk. 656; *Lassels v. Cornwallis*, 2 Vern. 465; *George v. Milbank*, 9 Ves. 189; *Holloway v. Millard*, 1 Mad. 414, 419, 420; *Jeremy on Equity Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 376, 377*. The distinction is a nice one, and not very satisfactory. Why, when the party executes a power in favor of others, and not of himself, a court of equity should defeat his intention, although within the scope of the power, and should execute something beside that intention and contrary to it, is not very intelligible. If it be said that he ought to be just before he is generous, that addresses itself merely to his sense of morals. The power enabled him to give, either to himself, or to his creditors, or to mere voluntary donees. Why should a court of equity restrict this right of election, if *bond fide* exercised? Is not this to create rights, not given by law, rather than to enforce rights secured by law? If the power was *bond fide* created, why should a court of equity interpose to change its objects or its operations? See *Sugden on Powers*, ch. 6, § 3.

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 2, and the cases there cited, note (h); 1 Mad. Eq. Pr. 44, 45; *Sugden on Powers*, ch. 6, § 1. See *Ellis v. Nimmo*, Lloyd & Gould's Rep. 333; *Fortescue v. Barnett*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 36, 42, 43; *post*, § 372.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 2, and note (h); *Gilbert, Lex Prætoria*, p. 305, 306.

their debts;¹ nor against a purchaser for a valuable consideration without notice.² And there are other cases of the defective execution of powers, where equity will not interfere; as, for instance, in regard to powers which are in their own nature statutable, where equity must follow the law, be the consideration ever so meritorious. Thus, the power of a tenant in tail to make leases under a statute, if not executed in the requisite form prescribed by the statute, will not be made available in equity, however meritorious the consideration may be.³ And indeed it may be stated as generally, although not universally, true, that the remedial power of courts of equity does not extend to the supplying of any circumstance, for the want of which the legislature has declared the instrument void; for, otherwise, equity would, in effect, defeat the very policy of the legislative enactments.⁴

§ 178. Upon one or both of these grounds, to wit, that there is no superior equity, or that it is against the policy of the law, the remedial power of courts of equity does not extend to the case of a defective fine, as against the issue, or of a defective recovery, as against a remainder-man;⁵ unless, indeed, there is something in the transaction to affect the conscience of the issue, or the remainder-man.⁶

§ 179. In regard to mistakes in wills, there is no doubt that courts of equity have jurisdiction to correct them, when they are apparent upon the face of the will, or may be made out by a due construction of its terms; for in cases of wills the intention will

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1 ch. 1, § 7, note (v); id. ch. 4, § 25, note (c); Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 369, 370, 371.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, note (v); id. ch. 4, § 25, and note (f); id. B. 6, ch. 3, § 3. But see id. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, note (t).

³ *Darlington v. Pulteney*, Cowp. 267; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, and note (l). But see 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 2, p. 541 to 545. See Gilbert, *Lex Prætoria*, p. 304, 305, the difference of a power created by the parties. See also 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, and note (l).

⁴ *Ante*, §. 96; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, note (t); *Hibbert v. Rolleston*, 3 Bro. Ch. 571, and Mr. Belt's note, id.; *Ex parte Bulteel*, 2 Cox, 243; *Duke of Bolton v. Williams*, 2 Ves. Jr. 138; *Curtis v. Perry*, 6 Ves. 739, 745, 746, 747; *Mestaer v. Gillespie*, 11 Ves. 621, 624, 625; *Dixon v. Ewart*, 3 Meriv. 321, 332; *Thompson v. Leake*, 1 Mad. 39; *Thompson v. Smith*, 1 Mad. 395; *Bright v. Boyd*, 1 Story, 478. *Quere*, how it would be where a due execution was prevented by fraud, accident, or mistake. See 11 Ves. 625; 1 Mad. 39; id. 395.

⁵ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, note (u); id. ch. 5, § 2, and note (h).

⁶ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, note (k); id. 15; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 2 T. 4, and 2 T. 8, 2 T. 10, 3 N. 2.

prevail over the words. But, then, the mistake must be apparent on the face of the will, otherwise there can be no relief; for, at least since the statute of frauds, which requires wills to be in writing (whatever may have been the case before the statute),¹ parol evidence, or evidence *dehors* the will, is not admissible to vary or control the terms of the will, although it is admissible to remove a latent ambiguity.²

§ 180. But the mistake, in order to lead to relief, must be a clear mistake, or a clear omission, demonstrable from the structure and scope of the will.³ Thus, if in a will there is a mistake in the computation of a legacy, it will be rectified in equity.⁴ So, if there is a mistake in the name, or description, or number, of the legatees, intended to take,⁵ or in the property intended to be bequeathed,⁶ equity will correct it.

¹ Lord Hardwicke, in *Milner v. Milner* (1 Ves. 106), remarked, that in the early ecclesiastical law, in accordance with the civil law, it was held that errors in legacies might be corrected by the intention of the testator, contrary to his words; and he cited Swinburne on Wills, p. 7, ch. 5, § 13, and Godolphin, p. 447, and the text of the civil law, and the Commentary of Cujacius on the Digest, Lib. 30, tit. 1, l. 15; Cujacii Opera (edit. 1758), tom. 7; Comment. ad id. Leg. p. 993, 994. He then added: "Indeed, at the time some of these books were written, the statute of frauds had not taken place; and as the law [was] then held, parol evidence might be given in all courts to explain a will. And perhaps some contrariety of opinions may have been on this subject, where the intention appears on the face of the will, and where not; almost all the authorities in the civil law agreeing in the first case, that the intention shall prevail against the words. But some have thought otherwise in the latter case, where the intention appeared, not on the face of the will, but only by matter *dehors*; although the better opinion even there is, that the intention shall prevail. However, that difficulty cannot be here, as the intention appears on the face of the will."

² *Milner v. Milner*, 1 Ves. 106; *Ulrich v. Litchfield*, 2 Atk. 373; *Hampshire v. Peirce*, 2 Ves. 216; *Bradwin v. Harper*, Ambler, 374; *Stebbing v. Walkey*, 2 Bro. Ch. 85; s. c. 1 Cox, 250; *Danvers v. Manning*, 2 Bro. Ch. 18; s. c. 1 Cox, 203; *Campbell v. French*, 3 Ves. 321; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 11, § 7, note (v); 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 66, 67.

³ *Mellish v. Mellish*, 4 Ves. 49; *Philipps v. Chamberlaine*, id. 51, 57; *Del Mare v. Rebello*, 3 Bro. Ch. 446; *Purse v. Snaplin*, 1 Atk. 415; *Holmes v. Custance*, 12 Ves. 279.

⁴ *Milner v. Milner*, 1 Ves. 106; *Danvers v. Manning*, 2 Bro. Ch. 18; *Door v. Geary*, 1 Ves. 255, 256; *Giles v. Giles*, 1 Keen, 692.

⁵ *Stebbing v. Walkey*, 2 Bro. Ch. 85; *Rivers's case*, 1 Atk. 410; *Parsons v. Parsons*, 1 Ves. Jr. 266; *Beaumont v. Fell*, 2 P. Will. 141; *Hampshire v. Peirce*, 2 Ves. 216; *Bradwin v. Harper*, Ambler, 374.

⁶ *Selwood v. Mildmay*, 3 Ves. 306; *Door v. Geary*, 1 Ves. 250. And see *Newburgh v. Newburgh*, 5 Mad. Ch. 364.

§ 180 *a.* It will be found, upon examination, we think, that American courts of equity have not interfered to correct alleged mistakes in the execution of wills, either as to the statutory requisites,¹ or the manner of writing, as by inserting the name of another legatee in lieu of one which had been written by the mistake of the scrivener,² or applying a devise or bequest to a subject-matter intended by the testator, but not fully expressed.³ The extent to which the English equity courts have sometimes carried this branch of their remedial powers has more the appearance of making men's wills, as they probably would do if now alive, than of carrying them into effect, as they were in fact made. But one may make a binding contract to dispose of his property by will in a particular mode, and a court of equity will decree specific performance of such a contract, where otherwise it would operate as a fraud upon others.⁴

§ 180 *b.* And in a recent English case⁵ where the testator evinced, in making his will, an intention to give his property equally among his four daughters, but recited that two of his daughters, A. and B., would become entitled to settled estates after his decease, and that he had taken that into account in making his will, and had not devised them so large a share as he otherwise should have done; and devised much more to his other two daughters than to them, when, in fact, all his daughters were equally entitled to shares in the settled estates, and in consequence of this mistake of the testator, the two latter would receive, in the whole, much more than the two former; but as the will did not attempt to affect the settled estates, the court held that no question of election arose, and that no relief could be given. Lord Romilly, M. R., said, in giving judgment: "Because the testator has made a mistake, you cannot afterwards remodel the will, and make it that which you

¹ [* *Nutt v. Nutt*, 1 Freem. Ch. Miss. 128.

² *Yates v. Cole*, 1 Jones, Eq. (N. C.) 110.

³ It is held, in a recent English case, that extrinsic evidence is not admissible to show that a society named as being in London, there being none of that name in London, referred to a society of that name out of London. *In re The Clergy Society*, 2 Kay & J. 615. But if there had been two such societies, and the quest had been general, it might have been explained by extrinsic evidence to a latent ambiguity. See *Bennett v. Marshall*, 2 Kay & J. 740; *Stringer v. Ordiner*, 5 Jur. N. S. 260; *Goode v. Goode*, 22 Mo. 518.

⁴ *Johnson v. Hubbell*, 2 Stockton's Ch. 332; *post*, § 786, and cases cited.

⁵ *Box v. Barrett*, Law Rep. 3 Eq. 244.]

suppose he intended, and as he would have drawn it, if he had known the incorrectness of his supposition.”]

§ 181. But in each of these cases, the mistake must be clearly made out; for if it is left doubtful, equity will not interfere.¹ And so, if the words of the bequest are plain, evidence of a different intention is inadmissible to establish a mistake.² Neither will equity rectify a mistake if it does not appear what the testator would have done in the case, if there had been no mistake.³

§ 182. The same principle applies, where a legacy is revoked, or is given upon a manifest mistake of facts. Thus, if a testator revokes legacies to A. and B., giving as a reason, that they are dead, and they are, in fact, living, equity will hold the revocation invalid, and decree the legacies.⁴ So, if a woman gives a legacy to a man, describing him as her husband, and in point of fact the marriage is void, he having a former wife then living, the bequest will, in equity, be decreed void.⁵

§ 182 *a*. But though it is clear, that a legacy, given to a person, in a character which the legatee does not fill, and by the fraudulent assumption of which character the testator has been deceived, will not take effect, yet if the testator is not deceived, although a false character is in fact assumed, the legacy will be good. *A fortiori*, it will be good if both parties, not only know the actual facts, but are designedly parties to the assumption of the false character. Thus, where the testator and the legatee A. G. were married, both knowing at the time that the legatee had a prior husband alive, and afterwards the testator gave all the residue of his estate to the legatee, describing her as his wife A. G., it was held that the legacy was good, for as both parties had a guilty knowledge of the facts, no fraud was committed on the testator. And it was then said, that however criminal the conduct of the parties might be, it was no part of the duty of courts of equity to punish parties for immoral conduct by depriving them of their civil rights.⁶

¹ *Holmes v. Custance*, 12 Ves. 279.

² *Chambers v. Minchin*, 4 Ves. 676. But see *Fonnereau v. Poyntz*, 1 Bro. Ch. 472, 480; *Powell v. Mouchett*, 6 Madd. 216; *Smith v. Streatfield*, 1 Meriv. 358.

³ See *Smith v. Maitland*, 1 Ves. Jr. 363.

⁴ *Campbell v. French*, 3 Ves. 321.

⁵ *Kennell v. Abbott*, 4 Ves. 808.

⁶ *Giles v. Giles*, 1 Keen, 685, 692, 693.

§ 183. But a false reason given for a legacy, or for the revocation of a legacy, is not always a sufficient ground to avoid the act or bequest in equity. To have such an effect, it must be clear that no other motive mingled in the legacy, and that it constituted the substantial ground of the act or bequest.¹ The civil law seems to have proceeded upon the same ground. The Digest² says, “*falsam causam legato non obesse, verius est ; quia ratio legandi legato non cohæret. Sed plerumque doli exceptio locum habebit, si probetur, alias legaturus non fuisse.*” The meaning of this passage is, that a false reason given for the legacy is not of itself sufficient to destroy it. But there must be an exception of any fraud practised, from which it may be presumed, that the person giving the legacy would not, if that fraud had been known to him, have given it.³ And the same reasoning applies to a case of clear mistake.

CHAPTER VI.

ACTUAL OR POSITIVE FRAUD.

[* § 184. Courts of equity have concurrent jurisdiction with courts of law in matters of fraud.

§ 185. The present jurisdiction of frauds originated in the abolition of the court of Star Chamber.

§ 186-189. Attempts to define fraud. That is impossible. Courts of equity recognize every intentional deception of another, to his detriment, in matters of property, as actionable in some court.

¹ *Kennell v. Abbott*, 4 Ves. 802. [* See also *Wilkinson v. Joughin*, 12 Jur. n. s. 330.]

² Dig. Lib. 35, tit. 1, l. 72, § 6. See also Swinburne on Wills, Pt. 7, § 22, p. 557.

³ *Kennell v. Abbott*, 4 Ves. 808. [* A lady who had gone through the ceremony of marriage and lived with the testator as his wife, up to the time of his death, was held entitled to a legacy given to the testator's “wife,” the court being satisfied that at the time of going through the ceremony of marriage both parties believed the husband of the lady was dead, and, upon reasonable inquiry, although this proved not to have been the fact. *In re Pitts' Will*, 5 Jur. n. s. 1235. Any instrument defectively executed may nevertheless be treated as evidence of the agreement of the parties, and thus form the basis of a decree in equity reforming the instrument. *Jones v. Baird*, 4 Jones, Eq. 167.]

- § 190, 190 a. Fraud must be proved, either directly or presumptively, to the satisfaction of the court.
- § 191. *Suggestio falsi*; when it will avoid contracts.
- § 192. Definition of positive fraud.
- § 193. Party bound by his representation, if made rashly.
- § 193 a. Fraud, by agent, binds the principal, although innocent.
- § 194. Equity cannot enforce absolute moral justice.
- § 195. Examples illustrative of legal fraud.
- § 196. Immaterial misrepresentations not binding in law.
- § 197. Must be one in which the other party places confidence; not mere opinion.
- § 198. Opinion, in some matters, the same as facts.
- § 199. Foolish confidence no ground of relief.
- § 200. Unless under special circumstances.
- § 200 a. Party must use his own means of knowledge.
- § 201. Puffing, no fraud, ordinarily.
- § 202, 203. No fraud, without deception and damage.
- § 203 a. Party must repudiate the contract on discovery of fraud.
- § 204. *Suppressio veri*, may, or may not, be legal fraud.
- § 205, 206. Must be a breach of confidence, which the party knows to exist, to be legal fraud.
- § 207. Party not bound to communicate extraneous facts.
- § 208-210. But must state intrinsic facts of the essence of the contract.
- § 211. Roman civil law required absolute good faith.
- § 212, 212 a. Common law will not tolerate fraud, even by silence.
- § 213, 214. The application of the rule depends upon circumstances.
- § 215. Cases of sureties.
- § 216. Insurance requires the utmost good faith.
- § 217, 218. So of all cases of fiduciary relation, or special confidence.
- § 219, 220. Illustrations of such confidence.
- § 221, 222. Positive fraud, by overreaching, or betraying confidence in persons of weak mind.
- § 223, 224. Persons of unsound mind, not able to contract.
- § 225. History of the law on this subject.
- § 226. Lunatics liable for torts committed on others.
- § 227. Relief granted upon the ground of fraud.
- § 228. Contracts for necessities, or in ignorance of defect of mind, not held void.
- § 229. Even matters of record may be avoided.
- § 230. Drunkenness a ground of relief in equity.
- § 231. But it must be such as to destroy reason for the time, or undue advantage must have been taken of the party.
- § 232. Equity will sometimes refuse to interfere, even then, when no injustice has been done.
- § 233. Continental and Scottish writers regard such contracts void.
- § 234-238 a. Persons of weak mind entitled to the protection of courts of equity.
- § 239. Duress of circumstances may be ground of relief.
- § 240-242. Contracts of infants not binding in equity.
- § 243. Contracts of married women void.
- § 244. Unconscionable bargains set aside in equity.
- § 245-250. Inadequacy of price no ground of relief, unless so gross as to be evidence of fraud.
- § 251. Contracts obtained by surprise set aside in equity.

- § 252, 253. Other instances of actual fraud.
- § 254. Fraudulent suppression of deeds and wills.
- § 255. Colorable execution of powers void in equity.
- § 256. Acts, fraudulently prevented, equity treats, as done.
- § 257. Consent, fraudulently withheld, equity dispenses with.
- § 257 a. Fraud on third parties does not always render contract void.
- § 257 b. *Ex parte* proceedings, under misapprehension, enjoined.
- § 257 c. Equity will relieve against attempted fraud upon courts or acts of legislature.]

§ 184. LET us now pass to another great head of concurrent jurisdiction in equity, that of fraud. And here it may be laid down as a general rule, subject to few exceptions, that courts of equity exercise a general jurisdiction in cases of fraud, sometimes concurrent with, and sometimes exclusive of, other courts.¹ It has been

¹ *Barker v. Ray*, 2 Russ. 63; *post*, § 238, 252, 264, 440. Mr. Fonblanque, in his note (B. 1, ch. 2, § 3, note *u*), says: "Whether courts of equity could interpose, and relieve against fraud practised in the obtaining of a will, appears to have been formerly a point of considerable doubt. In some cases we find the court of chancery distinctly asserting its jurisdiction; as in *Maundy v. Maundy*, 1 Ch. Rep. 66; *Well v. Thornagh*, Prec. Ch. 123; *Goss v. Tracy*, 1 P. Wms. 287; 2 Vern. 700; in other cases disclaiming such jurisdiction, though the fraud was gross and palpable; as in *Roberts v. Wynne*, 1 Ch. Rep. 125; *Archer v. Moss*, 2 Vern. 8; *Herbert v. Lownes*, 1 Ch. Rep. 13; *Thynn v. Thynn*, 1 Vern. 296; *Devenish v. Barnes*, Prec. Ch. 3; *Barnesley v. Powell*, 1 Ves. 287; *Marriott v. Marriott*, Str. 666. That an action at law will lie upon a promise, that if the devisor would not charge the land with a rent-charge, the devisee would pay a certain sum to the intended legatee of the rent; see *Rockwood v. Rockwood*, 1 Leon. 192; *Cro. Eliz.* 163. See also *Dutton v. Poole*, 1 Vent. 318, 332; *Beringer v. Beringer*, 16 June, 26 Car. II.; *Chamberlin v. Chamberlin*, 2 Freem. 34; *Leicester v. Foxcroft*, cited *Gilb. Rep.* 11; *Reech v. Kennegal*, 26 October, 1748. But since the cases of *Kerrick v. Bransby*, 3 Brown's P. C. 358, and *Webb v. Claverden*, 2 Atk. 424, it appears to have been settled, that a will cannot be set aside in equity for fraud and imposition, because a will of personal estate may be set aside for fraud in the ecclesiastical court, and a will of real estate may be set aside at law; for in such cases, as the *animus testandi* is wanting, it cannot be considered as a will. *Bennett v. Vade*, 2 Atk. 324; *Anon.*, 3 Atk. 17. Though equity will not set aside a will for fraud, nor restrain the probate of it in the proper court, yet if the fraud be proved it will not assist the party practising it, but will leave him to make what advantage he can of it. *Nelson v. Oldfield*, 2 Vern. 76. But if the validity of the will has been already determined and acted upon, equity will restrain proceedings in the Prerogative Court to controvert its validity. *Sheffield v. Duchess of Buckingham*, 1 Atk. 628. Lord Hardwicke, having admitted that a court of equity cannot set aside a will for fraud, observes, in the above case of *Sheffield v. Duchess of Buckingham*, that 'the admission of a fact by a party concerned, and who is most likely to know it, is stronger than if determined by a jury; and facts are as properly

already stated, that in a great variety of cases fraud is remediable, and effectually remediable at law.¹ Nay, in certain cases, such as

concluded by an admission, as by a trial.¹ That the party prejudiced by the fraud may file a bill for a discovery of all its circumstances, is unquestionable. Supposing, then, the defendant to admit the fraud, if the admission is to have the effect ascribed to it by Lord Hardwicke, it still remains to be determined how a court of equity ought to proceed. If it could not relieve, it would follow, as a consequence, that so much of the bill as seeks relief would be demurrable; but the invariable practice in such cases is to seek relief, and the issue directed is to furnish the ground upon which the court is to proceed in giving such relief." But the question whether a court of equity will interpose and grant relief in cases of wills obtained or suppressed by fraud has been much litigated since the note of Mr. Fonblanque was written; and it is now well settled, that a court of equity will not entertain jurisdiction to set aside a will obtained by fraud, or establish a will suppressed by fraud, whatever relief it may otherwise grant under special circumstances. See *Allen v. Macpherson*, 5 Beav. 469; s. c. on appeal, 1 Phillips, Ch. 133. In this case, upon the appeal, Lord Cottenham discussed the authorities at large, and said: "The testator in this case had bequeathed a considerable property to the plaintiff by his will and subsequent codicils. He afterwards, by a further codicil (the ninth), revoked these bequests, and in lieu of them made a small pecuniary provision in his favor. It was alleged by the bill that this alteration was procured by false and fraudulent representations made by an illegitimate son of the testator, and by the defendant, Susannah Evans, his daughter, as to the character and conduct of the plaintiff, Susannah Evans being the residuary legatee. To this bill the defendants demurred. The master of the rolls overruled the demurrer, and from this judgment the defendants have appealed. The question is one of considerable importance. The same objection of fraud, founded upon the same facts, was made in the Ecclesiastical Court upon the application for probate. It did not, however, prevail. This, then, is, in substance, an attempt to review the proceedings in that court; for a sufficient case of imposition and fraud practised on the testator would have been a ground for refusing the probate. There are, undoubtedly, cases, where fraud being proved, this court has declared the party committing the fraud a trustee for the person against whom the fraud was practised; but none of these cases appear to me to go so far as the present. The case of *Seagrave v. Kirwan* has no very close application to the question now before the court. The chancellor of Ireland, Sir Anthony Hart, declared the executor a trustee, as to the residue, for the next of kin. But in that case the testator never intended that the executor should take any benefit under the will. The rule, which then prevailed, that the executor was entitled to the residue, unless otherwise disposed of, except where a legacy was bequeathed to him by the will, was a rule of interpretation or construction. The learned judge considered that it was the

¹ *Ante*, § 59, 60; 3 Black. Comm. 431; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 3, note (r); 4 Inst. 84; *Bright v. Eynon*, 1 Burr. 396; *Jackson v. Burgott*, 10 Johns. 457, 462.

fraud in obtaining a will, whether of personal estate, or real estate, the proper remedy is exclusively vested in other courts; in wills

duty of the executor who prepared the will, and who was a gentleman of the bar, to have informed the testator that such was the rule. He was not allowed to profit from this omission, and was therefore decreed to be a trustee for the next of kin. The Ecclesiastical Court had no authority to order this. They had no power to do what the justice of the case required. So, in *Kennell v. Abbott* (4 Ves. 802). There, a fraud had been practised, and the question was one of intention. The testatrix intended the legacy for her husband. The legatee had fraudulently assumed that character. The master of the rolls, Sir Pepper Arden, came to the conclusion that the character he had so assumed was the only motive for the gift. The law, therefore, he said, would not permit him to avail himself of the testatrix's bounty. In the case of *Marriot v. Marriot*, which is mentioned in *Strange* (p. 666), and also in Chief Baron Gilbert's Reports (p. 203; see p. 209), it does not appear what was the nature of the imputed fraud. The cause was compromised, and the judgment, according to the report in Gilbert, was written by the learned judge, but not delivered. He says that a court of equity may, according to the real intention of the testator, declare a trust upon a will, although it be not contained in the will itself, in these three cases. First, in the case of a notorious fraud upon a legatee; as if the drawer of a will should insert his own name instead of the name of the legatee, no doubt he would be a trustee for the real legatee. Secondly, where the words imply a trust for the relations, as in the case of a specific devise to the executors, and no disposition of the residue. Thirdly, in the case of a legatee promising the testator to stand as a trustee for another. And nobody, he adds, has thought that declaring a trust in these cases is an infringement upon the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. These are the only positions laid down in the intended judgment, which are applicable to the present question. They do not admit of dispute, but are very distinguishable from the case now under consideration. It is sufficient to observe that in none of these instances would the Ecclesiastical Court be competent to afford relief. The same remarks will apply to the case, also, of *Kennell v. Abbott*, which I have already mentioned. But in *Plume v. Beale* (1 P. Wms. 188), where a legacy was introduced by forgery, Lord Chancellor Cowper refused to interfere, saying it might have been proved in the Ecclesiastical Court, with a particular reservation as to that legacy. There the interference of the court of equity was unnecessary. The question might have been settled by the Ecclesiastical Court. In the case of *Barnesley v. Powell* (1 Ves. Sen. p. 284), Lord Hardwicke says, that fraud in making or obtaining a will must be inquired into and determined by the Ecclesiastical Court, but that fraud in procuring a will to be established in that court—fraud, not upon the testator, but upon the person disinherited thereby—might be the subject of inquiry in this court. Fraud, he says, in obtaining the will, infects the whole, but the case of a will in which the probate has been obtained by fraud upon the next of kin, is of another consideration; and Lord Apsley, in the case of *Meadows v. The Duchess of Kingston* (Amb. 762), recognizes this distinction. But the case which has the closest resemblance to this is *Kerrick v. Bransby*, decided in the House of Lords (7 Bro. P. C. 457). It was alleged in that case, that the will had been obtained by fraud and imposi-

of personal estate, in the ecclesiastical courts;¹ and in wills of real estates, in the courts of common law.² But there are many

tion practised on the testator; and the chancellor, Lord Macclesfield, was of that opinion, and pronounced a decree, the effect of which was to deprive the legatee of all benefit under it. It is true that the prayer of the bill was, that the will might be cancelled; but the decree did not do more than direct the legatee to account for the testator's personal estate, and that what should appear to be in his hands should be paid over to the plaintiff, and that, if necessary, the plaintiff should be at liberty to use the legatee's name to get in the debts or other personal estate of the testator; in substance declaring him a trustee for the plaintiff. But this judgment was reversed on appeal in the House of Lords. It was suggested at the bar, upon the argument in the present case, that the decree might perhaps have been reversed on the merits. That, however, has not been the understanding of the profession; and Lord Hardwicke, who probably was acquainted with the history of the case, expressly states in *Barnesley v. Powell*, that it was decided on the question of jurisdiction. Lord Eldon, also, in *Ex parte Fearon* (5 Ves. 633; see p. 647), observes that it was determined in *Kerrick v. Bransby*, that this court could not take any cognizance of wills of personal estate, as to matters of fraud. I am of opinion, therefore, as well on authority as on principle, that the demurrer was proper, and ought to have been sustained." Again, in *Price v. Dewhurst*, 4 Mylne & Craig, 76, 80, 81, Lord Cottenham said: "The first question which occurs is, how can this court, in administering a testator's property, take any notice of a will of which no probate has been obtained from the Ecclesiastical Court of this country? This court knows nothing of any will of personalty, except such as the Ecclesiastical Court has, by the probate, adjudged to be the last will. The same question occurred before the Supreme Court of the U. S. in the case of *Gaines and wife v. Chew and others*, 2 Howard, S. Ct. 619, 645, 646. In that case, Mr. Justice McLean, in delivering the opinion of the court, said: "In cases of fraud, equity has a concurrent jurisdiction with a court of law; but in regard to a will charged to have been obtained through fraud, this rule does not hold. It may be difficult to assign any very satisfactory reason for this exception. That exclusive jurisdiction over the probate of wills is vested in another tribunal, is the only one that can be given. By art. 1637 of the Civil Code, it is declared that 'no testament can have effect unless it has been presented to the judge,' &c. And in *Clappier et al. v. Banks*, 11 Louis. Rep. 593, it is held, that a will alleged to be lost or destroyed, and which has never been proved, cannot be set up as evidence of title, in an action of revindication. In *Armstrong v. Administrators of Kosciusko*, 12 Wheat. 169, this court held,

¹ See *Gould v. Gould*, 3 Story, 537.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. 1, ch. 2, § 3, note (u); 3 Black. Comm. 451; *Webb v. Claverden*, 2 Atk. 424; *Kerrick v. Bransby*, 3 Bro. Parl. Cas. 358; s. c. 7 Bro. Parl. Cas. by Tomlins, 437; *Bennet v. Wade*, 2 Atk. 324; *Andrews v. Pavis*, 2 Bro. Parl. Cas. 476; *Jeremy*, Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 5, p. 488, 489; *Pemberton v. Pemberton*, 13 Ves. 297; 1 Hovenden on Frauds, Introd. 17; *Cooper*, Eq. Pl. 125.

cases, in which fraud is utterly irremediable at law; and courts of equity, in relieving against it, often go, not only beyond, but

that an action for a legacy could not be sustained under a will which had not been proved in this country before a court of probate, though it may have been effective, as a will, in the foreign country where it was made. In *Tarver v. Tarver et al.*, 9 Peters, 180, one of the objects of the bill being to set aside the probate of a will, the court said, 'The bill cannot be sustained for the purpose of avoiding the probate. That should have been done, if at all, by an appeal from the Court of Probate, according to the provisions of the law of Alabama.'* The American decisions on this subject have followed the English authorities. And a deliberate consideration of the question leads us to say, that both the general and local law require the will of 1813 to be proved, before any title can be set up under it. But this result does not authorize a negative answer to the second point. We think, under the circumstances, that the complainants are entitled to full and explicit answers from the defendants in regard to the above wills. These answers being obtained, may be used as evidence before the Court of Probate to establish the will of 1813 and revoke that of 1811. In order that the complainants may have the means of making, if they shall see fit, a formal application to the Probate Court, for the proof of the last will and the revocation of the first, having the answers of the executors, jurisdiction as to this matter may be sustained. And, indeed, circumstances may arise on this part of the case, which shall require a more definite and efficient action by the Circuit Court. For if the Probate Court shall refuse to take jurisdiction, from a defect of power to bring the parties before it, lapse of time, or on any other ground, and there shall be no remedy in the higher courts of the State, it may become the duty of the Circuit Court, having the parties before it, to require them to go before the Court of Probate, and consent to the proof of the will of 1813, and the revocation of that of 1811. And should this procedure fail to procure the requisite action on both wills, it will be a matter for grave consideration, whether the inherent powers of a court of chancery may not afford a remedy where the right is clear, by establishing the will of 1813. In the case of *Barnesly v. Powell*, 1 Ves. Sen. 119, 284, 287, above cited, Lord Hardwicke decreed that the defendant should consent, in the Ecclesiastical Court, to the revocation of the will in controversy and the granting of administration, &c. If the emergencies of the case shall require such a course as above indicated, it will not be without the sanction of Louisiana law. The twenty-first article of the Civil Code declares that, 'In civil matters, where there is no express law, the judge is bound to proceed and decide according to equity. To decide equitably, an appeal is to be made to natural law and reason, or received usages where positive law is silent.' This view seemed to be necessary to show on what ground and for what purpose jurisdiction may be exercised in reference to the will of 1813, though it has not been

* In *Trexler v. Miller*, 6 Iredell, Eq. 248, it was held that a court of equity has no power to fill up a blank in a will, or to restore a bequest, alleged to have been originally in the will, but fraudulently obliterated before the probate. The court must take the will as it is certified from the Probate Court.

even contrary to, the rules of law.¹ And with the exception of wills, as above stated, courts of equity may be said to possess a general, and perhaps a universal, concurrent jurisdiction with courts of law in cases of fraud, cognizable in the latter; and exclusive jurisdiction in cases of fraud beyond the reach of the courts of law.²

§ 185. The jurisdiction in matters of fraud is probably coeval with the existence of the court of chancery; and it is equally

admitted to probate." See also *Gingell v. Horne*, 9 Simons, 539, 548; *Smith v. Spencer*, 1 Younge & Coll. N. R. 75; *Tucker v. Phipps*, 3 Atk. 360; *Trembletown v. Lloyd*, 1 Bligh (N. S.), 429; *Cann v. Cann*, 1 P. Will. 723; *Dalston v. Coatsworth*, 1 P. Will. 733; *Hampden v. Hampden*, cited 1 P. Will. 733; s. c. 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. 250; *Jones v. Jones*, 3 Meriv. 161; s. c. 7 Price, 663; *Bennett v. Wade*, 2 Atk. 264; *Webb v. Claverden*, 3 Atk. 424; *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 257; *Belt's Suppl. to Vesey*, 74, 143; *Ridgway v. Roberts*, 4 Hare, 116; *Ryves v. Duke of Wellington*, 9 Beavan, 599; *Gould v. Gould*, 3 Story, 516. I use the qualified language of the text, though broader language is often used by elementary writers, who assert that courts of equity have jurisdiction to relieve against all frauds, except in cases of wills. (See Cooper on Eq. Pl. 125; 1 Hovenden on Frauds, Introd. p. 17.) Lord Hardwicke, in *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 155, said: "This court has an undoubted jurisdiction to relieve against every species of fraud." Yet there are some cases of fraud, in which equity does not ordinarily grant relief; as in warranties, misrepresentations, and frauds on the sale of personal property; but leaves the parties to their remedy at law. So also in cases of deceitful letters of credit. See *Russell v. Clark's Ex'rs*, 7 Cranch, 89. But Lord Eldon has intimated that in such cases relief might also be had in equity; *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 182; and Mr. Chancellor Kent has affirmed the same doctrine; *Bacon v. Bronson*, 7 Johns. Ch. 201. In *Hardwick v. Forbes's Adm'rs* (1 Bibb, Ky. 212), the court said: "It is a well-settled rule of law, that wherever a matter respects personal chattels, and lies merely in damages, the remedy is at law only, and for these reasons: 1st. Because courts of law are as adequate as courts of chancery, to grant complete and effectual reparation to the party injured. 2d. Because the ascertainment of damages is peculiarly the province of a jury." And the court farther suggested, that the same principle applied to a ratable deduction for fraud in like cases. But that a court of equity might properly interfere in such cases, to set aside and vacate the *whole* contract, at the instance of a party injured, in a case of *suppressio veri* or *suggestio falsi*; not entering into the point of damages. See *Waters v. Mattinglay*, 1 Bibb, 244; *Blackwell v. Oldham*, 4 Dana, 195.

¹ 1 *Garth v. Cotton*, 3 Atk. 755; *Man v. Ward*, 2 Atk. 229; *Trenchard v. Wanley*, 2 P. Will. 167.

² *Colt v. Wollaston*, 2 P. Will. 156; *Stent v. Bailis*, 2 P. Will. 220; *Bright v. Eynon*, 1 Burr. 396; *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 155; *Ferson v. Sanger*, *Davies*, 259; *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 182; *Warner v. Daniels*, 1 Wood. & Min. 112.

probable, that, in the early history of that court, it was principally exercised in matters of fraud, not remediable at law.¹ Its present active jurisdiction took its rise in a great measure from the abolition of the court of star chamber, in the reign of Charles the First;² in which court the plaintiff was not only relieved, but the defendant was punished for his fraudulent conduct. So that the interposition of chancery before that period was generally unnecessary.³

§ 186. It is not easy to give a definition of fraud in the extensive signification in which that term is used in courts of equity; and it has been said, that these courts have, very wisely, never laid down as a general proposition, what shall constitute fraud,⁴ or any general rule, beyond which they will not go upon the ground of fraud, lest other means of avoiding the equity of the courts should be found out.⁵ Fraud is even more odious than force; and Cicero has well remarked: “Cum autem duobus modis, id est, aut vi, aut fraude, fiat injuria; fraus, quasi vulpeculæ, vis, leonis videtur. Utrumque homine alienissimum; sed fraus odio digna majore.⁶ Pothier says that the term *fraud* is applied to every artifice made use of by one person for the purpose of deceiving another.⁷ “On appelle Dol toute espèce d’artifice, dont quelqu’un se sert pour en tromper un autre.⁸ Servius, in the Roman law, defined it thus: “Dolum malum machinationem quandam alterius decipienda causâ, cum aliud simulatur, et aliud agitur.” To this definition Labeo justly took exception, because a party might be circumvented by a thing done without simulation; and, on the other hand, without fraud, one thing might be done, and another

¹ 4 Inst. 84.

² Stat. 16 Car. I. ch. 10.

³ Fonbl. Eq. B. 1 ch. 2, § 12; 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 89.

⁴ Mortlock v. Buller, 10 Ves. 306.

⁵ Lawley v. Hooper, 3 Atk. 279. Lord Hardwicke, in his letter to Lord Kames, of the 30th of June, 1759 (Parke’s Hist. of Chanc. p. 508), says: “As to relief against frauds, no invariable rules can be established. Fraud is infinite; and were a court of equity once to lay down rules, how far they would go, and no father, in extending their relief against it, or to define strictly the species or evidence of it, the jurisdiction would be cramped, and perpetually eluded by new schemes, which the fertility of man’s invention would contrive.” See also 1 Domat, Civil Law, B. 1, tit. 18, § 3, art. 1.

⁶ Cic. de Offic. Lib. 1, ch. 13.

⁷ 1 Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, Pt. 1, ch. 1, art. 3, n. 28, p. 19.

⁸ Pothier, Traité des Oblig. Pt. 1, ch. 1, n. 28.

thing be pretended. And therefore he defined *fraud* to be any cunning, deception, or artifice, used to circumvent, cheat, or deceive another. “*Dolum malum esse omnem calliditatem, fallaciam, machinationem ad circumveniendum, fallendum, decipiendum alterum, adhibitam.*” And this is pronounced in the Digest to be the true definition. “*Labeonis Definitio vera est.*”¹

§ 187. This definition is, beyond doubt, sufficiently descriptive of what may be called positive, actual fraud, where there is an intention to commit a cheat or deceit upon another to his injury.² But it can hardly be said to include the large class of implied or constructive frauds, which are within the remedial jurisdiction of a court of equity. Fraud, indeed, in the sense of a court of equity, properly includes all acts, omissions, and concealments which involve a breach of legal or equitable duty, trust, or confidence, justly reposed, and are injurious to another, or by which an undue and unconscientious advantage is taken of another.³ And courts of equity will not only interfere in cases of fraud to set aside acts done; but they will also, if acts have by fraud been prevented from being done by the parties, interfere, and treat the case exactly as if the acts had been done.⁴

§ 188. Lord Hardwicke, in a celebrated case,⁵ after remarking that a court of equity has an undoubted jurisdiction to relieve against every species of fraud, proceeded to give the following enumeration of the different kinds of frauds. First: Fraud, which is *dolus malus*, may be actual, arising from facts and circumstances of imposition, which is the plainest case. Secondly: It may be apparent from the intrinsic nature and subject of the bargain itself; such as no man in his senses, and not under delusion, would make on the one hand, and as no honest and fair man would accept on the other; which are inequitable and unconscien-

¹ Dig. Lib. 4, tit. 3, l. 1, § 2; id. Lib. 2, tit. 14, l. 7, § 9. See also 1 Domat, Civ. Law, B. 1, tit. 18, § 3, n. 1. See also 1 Bell, Comm. B. 2, ch. 7, § 2, art. 173; *Le Neve v. Le Neve*, 3 Atk. 654; s. c. 1 Ves. 64; *Ambler*, 446.

² Mr. Jeremy has defined fraud to be a device, by means of which one party has taken an unconscientious advantage of the other. *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, p. 358.

³ See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 3, note (r); *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 155, 156; *Gale v. Gale*, 19 Barbour, 251.

⁴ *Middleton v. Middleton*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 96; *Lord Waltham's case*, cited 11 Ves. 638.

⁵ *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 155.

tious bargains, and of such even the common law has taken notice.¹ Thirdly: Fraud, which may be presumed from the circumstances and condition of the parties contracting; and this goes farther than the rule of law, which is, that it must be proved, not presumed. But it is wisely established in the court of chancery, to prevent taking surreptitious advantage of the weakness or necessity of another, which knowingly to do is equally against conscience, as to take advantage of his ignorance. Fourthly: Fraud, which may be collected and inferred, in the consideration of a court of equity, from the nature and circumstances of the transaction, as being an imposition and deceit on other persons, not parties to the fraudulent agreement. Fifthly: Fraud, in what are called catching bargains with heirs, reversioners, or expectants, in the life of the parents, which indeed seems to fall under one or more of the preceding heads.

§ 189. Fraud, then, being so various in its nature, and so extensive in its application to human concerns, it would be difficult to enumerate all the instances in which courts of equity will grant relief under this head. It will be sufficient, if we here collect some of the more marked classes of cases, in which the principles which regulate the action of courts of equity are fully developed, and from which analogies may be drawn to guide us in the investigation of other and novel circumstances.

§ 190. Before, however, proceeding to these subjects, it may be proper to observe, that courts of equity do not restrict themselves by the same rigid rules as courts of law do, in the investigation of fraud, and in the evidence and proofs required to establish it. It is equally a rule in courts of law and courts of equity that fraud is not to be presumed; but it must be established by proofs.² Circumstances of mere suspicion, leading to no certain results, will not, in either of these courts, be deemed a sufficient ground to establish fraud.³ On the other hand, neither of these courts insists

¹ See *James v. Morgan*, 1 Lev. 111.

² In 10 Coke, 56, it is laid down, that covin shall never be intended or presumed in at law, if it be expressly averred: *Qui odiosa et inhonesta non sunt in lege præsumenda, et, in facto, quod se habit ad bonum et malum, magis de bono, quam de malo, præsumendum est.* And this is in conformity to the rule of the civil law. *Dolum ex indiciis perspicuis probari convenit.* Cod. Lib. 2, tit. 21, l. 6.

³ *Trenchard v. Wanley*, 2 P. Will. 166; *Townsend v. Lowfield*, 1 Ves. 35; 3

upon positive and express proofs of fraud; but each deduces them from circumstances affording strong presumptions. But courts of equity will act upon circumstances, as presumptions of fraud, where courts of law would not deem them satisfactory proofs.¹ In other words, courts of equity will grant relief upon the ground of fraud, established by presumptive evidence, which evidence courts of law would not always deem sufficient proof to justify a verdict at law. It is in this sense that the remark of Lord Hardwicke is to be understood, when he said, that "fraud may be presumed from the circumstances and condition of the parties contracting; and this goes farther than the rule of law, which is, that fraud must be *proved*, not *presumed*."² And Lord Eldon has illustrated the same proposition by remarking, that a court of equity will, as it ought, in many cases, order an instrument to be delivered up, as unduly obtained, which a jury would not be justified in impeaching by the rules of law, which require fraud to be proved, and are not satisfied, though it may be strongly presumed.³

[* § 190 *a*. It is not safe to undertake to define what degree or kind of proof will justify a court of equity in granting relief against fraud. For the proof must satisfy the conscience of the chancellor, or court. And no man would deem it prudent to attempt to define the extent of that indispensable qualification in a judge, or a court, — the requisite amount or quality of his sense of justice. And men's views, in weighing evidence, are as various as their forms or their features. All we can say is, that the proof must be sufficient to satisfy the mind of the triers, whether court or jury, of the existence of fraud. And to do this, it must be sufficient to overcome the natural presumption of honesty and fair dealing. And that is undoubtedly one of considerable force. Hence we do not expect courts, and we do not advise juries, to find fraud, except upon reasonably satisfactory evidence. And we are by no means certain, that juries are more reluctant to act, in such cases, from circumstances, than judges. We should incline to the contrary opinion. Hence we could not subscribe fully to the opinion that courts of equity will find fraud upon any less

Atk. 534; *Walker v. Symonds*, 3 Swanst. 61; *Bath and Montague's case*, 3 Ch. Cas. 85; 1 Madd. Pr. Ch. 208; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 11, § 8.

¹ See *Warner v. Daniels*, 1 Wood. & Min. 103.

² *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 155, 156.

³ *Fullager v. Clark*, 18 Ves. 483.

proof, or any different proof, from what a jury will require. We think not. A jury is, in general, we believe, the better, the fairer, and more competent tribunal to investigate a question of fraud, depending upon circumstances. And besides, if we admit that there exists in courts of chancery, a capacity, or right, or duty, or disposition, to find fraud, upon less proof, or different proof, from that which is required in courts of law, we at once establish a ground of preference between the two jurisdictions, which was never before claimed, and one of a very invidious character in its practical operation. We trust, then, that no one will be drawn into the adoption of any such view upon the subject. We only desire to caution the inexperienced against setting out with any such view, since the general course of opinion and practice is now decidedly in the opposite direction. It is very common now in courts of equity, to send issues of this character into a court of law, to be there tried by a jury. And in the English courts of equity they are sometimes tried by a jury summoned into the court of chancery.¹

§ 190 *b*. The extent of responsibility for a false representation is thus defined in a recent case.² Every man must be held responsible for the consequences of such an act, upon which any one acts, and so acting suffers loss or injury, provided it appears that the representation was made with the direct intent that it should be so acted upon, and in the manner which occasions the injury or loss, and where such injury or loss is the direct and immediate consequence of the representation so made.³

§ 191. One of the largest classes of cases, in which courts of equity are accustomed to grant relief, is where there has been a misrepresentation, or *suggestio falsi*.⁴ It is said, indeed, to be a very old head of equity, that, if a representation is made to another person, going to deal in a matter of interest, upon the faith of that representation, the former shall make that representation good, if he knows it to be false.⁵ To justify, however, an interposition in such cases, it is not only necessary to establish the fact

¹ [**Ante*, § 72.]

² *Barry v. Croskey*, 2 Johns. & H. 21.

³ *Collins v. Cave*, 6 H. & N. 131.]

⁴ *Broderick v. Broderick*, 1 P. Will. 240; *Jarvis v. Duke*, 1. Vern. 20; *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 173, 182.

⁵ *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 173, 182.

of misrepresentation; but that it is in a matter of substance, or important to the interests of the other party, and that it actually does mislead him.¹ For, if the misrepresentation was of a trifling or immaterial thing; or if the other party did not trust to it, or was not misled by it; or if it was vague and inconclusive in its own nature; or if it was upon a matter of opinion or fact, equally open to the inquiries of both parties, and in regard to which neither could be presumed to trust the other; in these and the like cases there is no reason for a court of equity to interfere to grant relief upon the ground of fraud.²

§ 192. Where the party intentionally or by design misrepresents a material fact, or produces a false impression,³ in order to mislead another,⁴ or to entrap or cheat him, or to obtain an undue advantage of him; in every such case there is a positive fraud in the truest sense of the terms.⁵ There is an evil act with an evil intent; *dolum malum ad circumveniendum*. And the misrepresentation may be as well by deeds or acts, as by words; by artifices to mislead,⁶ as well as by positive assertions.⁷ The civil law has well expressed this, when it says: “*Dolo malo pactum fit, quotiens circumscribendi alterius causâ, aliud agitur, et aliud agi simulatur.*”⁸ And again: “*Dolum malum à se abesse præstare venditor debet, qui non tantum in eo est, qui fallendi causâ obscure loquitur, sed etiam, qui insidiosè obscure dissimulat.*”⁹ The case here

¹ *Neville v. Wilkinson*, 1 Bro. Ch. 546; *Turner v. Harvey*, Jacob, 178; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 8; *Small v. Atwood*, 1 Younge, 407, 461; s. c. in Appeal, 6 Clark & Finnell. 232, 395; *Hough v. Richardson*, 3 Story, 659.

² See 1 Domat., B. 1, tit. 18, § 3, art. 2; *Trower v. Newcome*, 3 Meriv. 704; 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 484 (2d edit.); *Atwood v. Small*, 6 Clark & Finnell. 232, 233; s. c. *Small v. Atwood*, in Court of Exchequer, 1 Younge, 407.

³ See *Laidlaw v. Organ*, 2 Wheaton, 178, 195; *Pidcock v. Bishop*, 3 B. & Cressw. 605; *Smith v. The Bank of Scotland*, 1 Dow, Parl. 72; *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 173, 182.

⁴ See *The State v. Holloway*, 8 Blackf. 45.

⁵ *Atwood v. Small*, 6 Clark & Finnell. 232, 233; s. c. in Court of Exchequer, 1 Younge, 407; *Taylor v. Ashton*, 11 Mees. & Welsb. 401; *Warner v. Daniels*, 1 Wood & Min. 103.

⁶ See *Chisholm v. Gadsden*, 1 Strobb. 220.

⁷ 3 Black. Comm. 165; 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39; p. 484 (2d edit.); *Laidlaw v. Organ*, 2 Wheaton, 195; 1 Dow, Parl. 272.

⁸ Dig. Lib. 2, tit. 14, l. 7, § 9.

⁹ Dig. Lib. 18, tit. 1, l. 43, § 2; *Pothier de Vente*, n. 234, 237, 238.

put falls directly within one of the species of frauds enumerated by Lord Hardwicke; to wit, fraud arising from facts and circumstances of imposition.¹

§ 193. Whether the party, thus misrepresenting a material fact, knew it to be false, or made the assertion without knowing whether it were true or false, is wholly immaterial;² for the affirmation of what one does not know or believe to be true is equally, in morals and law, as unjustifiable as the affirmation of what is known to be positively false.³ And even if the party innocently misrepresents a material fact by mistake, it is equally conclusive, for it operates as a surprise and imposition upon the other party.⁴

[§ 193 a. The same general principles apply, whether the fraud was perpetrated by the party directly interested, or by an agent, if the act in which the fraud was committed be adopted by the principal. If the latter persists in taking the benefit of his agent's

¹ *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 155. In *Neville v. Wilkinson*, 1 Bro. Ch. 546, the lord chancellor (Thurlow) said: "It has been said, here is no evidence of actual fraud on R.; but only a combination to defraud him. A court of justice would make itself ridiculous, if it permitted such a distinction. Misrepresentation of circumstances is admitted, and there is positively a deception." And he added: "If a man, upon a treaty for any contract will make a false representation, by means of which he puts the party bargaining under a mistake upon the terms of the bargain, it is a fraud. It misleads the parties contracting on the subject of the contract."

² See *Wright v. Snowe*, 2 De Gex & Smale, 321.

³ *Ainslie v. Medlycott*, 9 Ves. 21; *Graves v. White*, Freem. 57. See also *Pearson v. Morgan*, 2 Bro. Ch. 389; *Foster v. Charles*, 6 Bing. 396; s. c. 7 Bing. 150; *Taylor v. Ashton*, 11 Mees. & Welsb. 401; *Smith v. Mitchell*, 6 Georgia, 458; *Hazard v. Irwin*, 18 Pick. 85. See also *Doggett v. Emerson*, 3 Story, C. C. 733; *Hough v. Richardson*, id. 691; *Mason v. Crosby*, 1 Wood. & Minot, 352; *Smith v. Babcock*, 2 id. 246; *Hamnatt v. Emerson*, 27 Maine, 308.

⁴ See *Pearson v. Morgan*, 2 Bro. Ch. 389; *Burrows v. Locke*, 10 Ves. 475; *De Manville v. Compton*, 1 Ves. & B. 355; *Ex parte Carr*, 3 Ves. & B. 111; 1 Marsh. on Insur. B. 1, ch. 10, § 1; *Carpenter v. American Ins. Co.*, 1 Story, 57; *Taymon v. Mitchell*, 1 Md. Ch. Dec. 496. In *Pearson v. Morgan*, 2 Bro. Ch. 385, 388, the case was, that A., being interested in an estate in fee, which was charged with £8,000 in favor of B., was applied to by C., who was about to lend money to B., to know if the £8,000 was still a subsisting charge on the estate. A. stated that it was, and C. lent his money to B. accordingly; it appearing afterwards that the charge had been satisfied, it was, nevertheless, held, that the money lent was a charge on the lands in the hands of A.'s heirs, because he either knew, or ought to have known, the fact of satisfaction, and his representation was a fraud on C.

fraud, it is immaterial whether the fraud was originally concocted by the principal or by the agent; the principal will be held implicated to the fullest extent, if he adopts the acts of his agent.¹ [* And in a recent case,² the same doctrine is thus broadly asserted: where once a fraud has been committed, not only is the person who has committed the fraud precluded from deriving any benefit from it, but every innocent person is so likewise, unless he has innocently acquired a subsequent interest. For a third person, by seeking to derive any benefit under such a transaction, or to retain any benefit resulting therefrom, becomes *particeps criminis*, however innocent of the fraud in its inception.] But where the alleged fraud by a vendor of real estate consisted in a fraudulent concealment of a right of way over the premises, proof of concealment by the vendor's agent has been held not sufficient to set aside the purchase; there must be proof of direct personal knowledge and concealment by the principal himself. And constructive knowledge of an agent, or knowledge acquired by him, otherwise than as agent for such sale, of a fact, the non-communication of which is made the ground of relief against the purchase, does not at all affect the contract.³]

§ 194. These principles are so consonant to the dictates of natural justice, that it requires no argument to enforce or support them. The principles of natural justice and sound morals do, indeed, go further; and require the most scrupulous good faith, candor, and truth, in all dealings whatsoever. But courts of justice generally find themselves compelled to assign limits to the exercise of their jurisdiction, far short of the principles deducible *ex æquo et bono*; and, with reference to the concerns of human life, they endeavor to aim at mere practical good and general con-

¹ *Fitzsimmons v. Joslin*, 21 Vermont, 129, 140-142, where the subject is fully examined, and the case of *Cornfoot v. Fowke*, 6 M. & W. 358, is questioned. [* It is here said: That the attempt to discriminate, between the existence of the scienter in the agent, and in the principal, seduced the court into a wrong conclusion. Lord St. Leonards, in his book on Vendors, p. 718, says, the case of *Cornfoot v. Fowke*, is "open to much observation." And in *National Exchange Co. v. Drew*, 2 Macqueen, 103, 108, 144, this case is discussed, and attempted to be reconciled with established principles.] See *Fuller v. Wilson*, 3 Ad. & Ell. n. s. 58.

² [* *Scholefield v. Templer*, Johnson, Eng. Ch. 155; *Hartopp v. Hartopp*, 21 Beavan, 259.]

³ *Wilde v. Gibson*, 1 House of Lords Cases, 605.

venience. Hence many things may be reprov'd in sound morals, which are left without any remedy, except by an appeal *in foro conscientie* to the party himself.¹ Pothier has expounded this subject with his usual force and sterling sense. "As a matter of conscience" (says he), "any deviation from the most exact and scrupulous sincerity is repugnant to the good faith that ought to prevail in contracts. Any dissimulation concerning the object of the contract, and what the opposite party has an interest in knowing, is contrary to that good faith; for, since we are commanded to love our neighbor as ourselves, we are not permitted to conceal from him any thing which we should be unwilling to have had concealed from ourselves under similar circumstances. But in civil tribunals a person cannot be allowed to complain of trifling deviations from good faith in the party with whom he has contracted. Nothing but what is plainly injurious to good faith ought to be there considered as a fraud, sufficient to impeach a contract; such as the criminal manœuvres and artifices employed by one party to induce the other to enter into the contract. And these should be fully substantiated by proof. *Dolum non nisi perspicuis indicis probari convenit.*"²

§ 195. The doctrine of law, as to misrepresentation, being in a practical view such as has been already stated, it may not be without use to illustrate it by some few examples. In the first place, the misrepresentation must be of something material, constituting an inducement or motive to the act or omission of the other party, and by which he is actually misled to his injury.³ Thus, if a person owning an estate, should sell it to another, representing that it contained a valuable mine, which constituted an inducement to the other side to purchase, and the representation were utterly false, the contract for the sale, and the sale itself, if completed, might be avoided for fraud; for the representation would go to the essence of the contract.⁴ So, where one wishing to sell a public-house falsely represented that the monthly receipts amounted to such a sum.⁵ So, of a representation that the estate was in the

¹ Pothier de Vente, n. 234, 235, 239.

² 1 Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, p. 19, n. 30; Cod. Lib. 2, tit. 21, l. 6; Taylor v. Fleet, 4 Barbour, S. C. 107; Irvine v. Kirkpatrick, 3 Eng. Law & Eq. 17.

³ Phillips v. Duke of Bucks, 1 Vern. 227; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 8.

⁴ See Lowndes v. Lane, 2 Cox, 363.

⁵ Philmore v. Hood, 6 Scott, 827.

county of A., when it was, in fact, in another county.]¹ But if he should represent that the estate contained twenty acres of woodland or meadow, and the actual quantity was only nineteen acres and three-quarters, there, if the difference in quantity would have made no difference to the purchaser in price, value, or otherwise, it would not, on account of its immateriality, have avoided the contract.² [So, a representation that a certain spring of water was on the land, but which was found to be just without the limits, will not avoid the contract, the spring not being a material inducement to the purchaser.³] So, if a person should sell a ship to another, representing her to be five years old, of a certain tonnage, coppered and copper-fastened, and fully equipped, and found with new sails and rigging; either of these representations, if materially untrue, so as to affect the essence or value of the purchase, would avoid it. But a trifling difference in either of these ingredients, in no way impairing the fair value or price, or not material to the purchaser, would have no such effect. Thus, for instance, if the ship was a half ton less in size, was a week more than five years old, was not copper-fastened in some unimportant place, and was deficient in some trifling rope, or had some sails which were in a very slight degree worn; these differences would not avoid the contract: for under such circumstances, the difference must be treated as wholly inconsequential.⁴ [So, of a misrepresentation by a horse-dealer, as to the place where he purchased the horse, offered by him for sale.⁵] The rule of the civil law would here apply: *Res bonâ fide vendita propter minimam causam inempta fieri non debet.*⁶ Indeed, it may be laid down as a general rule, that, when the sale is fair, and the parties are equally innocent, and the thing is sold in gross, by the quantity, by estimation and not by measurement, a deficiency will not ordinarily entitle a party to relief, either by an allowance for the de-

¹ *Best v. Stow*, 2 Sandf. Ch. 298.

² See *The Morris Canal Co. v. Emmett*, 9 Paige, 168; *Stebbins v. Eddy*, 4 Mason, 414; 2 Freem. 107; *Winston v. Gwathmey*, 8 B. Monroe, 19; *Twypont v. Warcup*, Finch, 310; *Winch v. Winchester*, 1 Ves. & Beam. 375. [But see *Elliot v. Bean*, 9 Ala. 772.]

³ *Winston v. Gwathmey*, 8 B. Monroe, 19.

⁴ See 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 2, § 11, art. 12.

⁵ *Geddes v. Pennington*, 5 Dow, 159.

⁶ Dig. Lib. 18, tit. 1, l. 54; 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 2, § 11, art. 3.

ficiency, nor by a rescission of the contract.¹ Thus, for example, the sale of a farm by known boundaries, containing by estimation a certain number of acres, will bind both parties, whether the farm contains more or less.²

§ 196. So, if an executor of a will should obtain a release from a legatee, upon a representation that he had no legacy left him by the will, which was false;³ or, if a devisee should obtain a release from the heir-at-law, upon a representation that the will was duly executed,⁴ when it was not; in each of these cases the release might be set aside for fraud.⁵ But if, in point of fact, in the first case, the legacy, though given in the will, had been revoked by a codicil; or, in the second case, if the will had been duly executed, although not at the time, or in the manner, or under the circumstances, stated by the devisee; the misrepresentation would not avoid the release, because it is immaterial to the rights of either party.

§ 197. In the next place, the misrepresentation must not only be in something material, but it must be in something in regard to which the one party places a known trust and confidence in the other.⁶ It must not be a mere matter of opinion,⁷ equally open to both parties for examination and inquiry, where neither party is presumed to trust to the other, but to rely on his own judgment. Not but that misrepresentation, even in a matter of opinion, may be relieved against as a contrivance of fraud, in cases of peculiar relationship or confidence, or where the other party has justly reposed upon it, and has been misled by it. But, ordinarily, matters of opinion between parties, dealing upon equal terms, though falsely stated, are not relieved against; because they are not presumed to mislead, or influence the other party, when each has equal means of information. Thus, a false opinion, expressed

¹ *Stebbins v. Eddy*, 4 Mason, 414; *Morris Canal Co. v. Emmett*, 9 Paige, 168.

² *Ibid*; *ante*, § 144 a. [But see *ante*, § 141.]

³ *Jarvis v. Duke*, 1 Vern. 19.

⁴ *Broderick v. Broderick*, 1 P. Will. 239, 240; *Pusey v. Desbouvrie*, 3 P. Will. 318, 320.

⁵ [As to setting aside a release on account of fraud, see *Ferris v. Crawford*, 2 Denio, 595.]

⁶ See *Smith v. The Bank of Scotland*, 1 Dow, Parl. 275; *Laidlaw v. Organ*, 2 Wheaton, 178, 195; *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 173, 182 to 192.

⁷ See *Ferson v. Sanger*, 1 Wood. & Min. 146; *Warner v. Daniels*, id 98.

intentionally by the buyer to the seller, of the value of the property offered for sale, where there is no special confidence, or relation, or influence between the parties, and each meets the other on equal grounds, relying on his own judgment, is not sufficient to avoid a contract of sale.¹ In such a case, the maxim seems to apply: *Scientia, utrinque par, pares contrahentes facit.*²

§ 198. But it would be otherwise, where a party knowingly places confidence in another, and acts upon his opinion, believing it to be honestly expressed.³ Thus if a man of known skill and

¹ But see *Wall v. Stubbs*, 1 Mad. 80; *Cadman v. Horner*, 18 Ves. 10; 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 485 (4th edit.). A mistaken opinion of the value of property, if honestly entertained, and stated as opinion merely, unaccompanied by any assertion or statement untrue in fact, can never be considered as a fraudulent misrepresentation. *Hepburn v. Dunlop*, 1 Wheaton, 189; *Irvine v. Kirkpatrick*, 3 Eng. Law & Eq. 17.

² 1 Marshall on Insur. B. 1, ch. 11, § 3, p. 473; 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 2, § 11, art. 3, 11, 12. Mr. Chancellor Kent has expounded the doctrine on this subject with admirable clearness and strength, in the following passage of his Commentaries. (Vol. 2, Lect. 39, p. 484, 485, 4th edit.) "When, however, the means of information relative to facts and circumstances, affecting the value of the commodity, are equally accessible to both parties, and neither of them does or says any thing tending to impose upon the other, the disclosure of any superior knowledge, which one party may have over the other, as to those facts and circumstances, is not requisite to the validity of a contract. There is no breach of any implied confidence, that one party will not profit by his superior knowledge as to facts and circumstances, open to the observation of both parties, or equally within the reach of their ordinary diligence; because neither party repose in any such confidence, unless it be specially tendered or required. Each one, in ordinary cases, judges for himself, and relies confidently, and perhaps presumptuously, upon the sufficiency of his own knowledge, skill, and diligence. The common law affords to every one reasonable protection against fraud in dealing; but it does not go to the romantic length of giving indemnity against the consequences of indolence and folly, or a careless indifference to the ordinary and accessible means of information. It reconciles the claims of convenience with the duties of good faith, to every extent compatible with the interests of commerce. This it does by requiring the purchaser to apply his attention to those particulars which may be supposed within the reach of his observation and judgment; and the vendor to communicate those particulars and defects which cannot be supposed to be immediately within the reach of such attention. If the purchaser be wanting in attention to these points, where attention would have been sufficient to protect him from surprise or imposition, the maxim *caveat emptor* ought to apply. Even against this maxim he may provide by requiring the vendor to warrant that which the law would not imply to be warranted; and if the vendor be wanting in good faith, *fides servanda* is a rule equally enforced at law and in equity." See also 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 2, § 11.

³ See *Shaeffer v. Sleade*, 7 Blackf. 178.

judgment in paintings should sell a picture to another, representing it to have been painted by some eminent master, as, for instance, by Reubens, Titian, or Correggio, and it should be false; there can be no doubt that it would be a misrepresentation, for which the sale might be avoided.¹ And the same principle would apply, in a like case, if he should falsely state his opinion to be, that it was a genuine painting of a great master, with an intent to influence the buyer in the purchase, and the latter, placing confidence in the skill, and judgment, and assertion of the seller, should complete the purchase on the faith thereof. But if the seller should truly represent the painting to be of such a master, and add, that it once belonged to a nobleman, or was fixed in a church (which circumstances he knew to be untrue); in such a case, if the representation of these collateral circumstances had no real tendency in the mind of the buyer to enhance or influence the purchase, it would not avoid the contract.²

§ 199. Nor is it every wilful misrepresentation even of a fact, which will avoid a contract upon the ground of fraud, if it be of such a nature that the other party had no right to place reliance on it, and it was his own folly to give credence to it; for courts of equity, like courts of law, do not aid parties who will not use their own sense and discretion upon matters of this sort.³ This may be illustrated by a case at law, where a party, upon making a purchase for himself and his partners, falsely stated to the seller, to induce him to the sale, that his partners would not give more for the property than a certain price. It was held, that no action would lie at law for a deceitful representation of this sort. Lord Ellenborough on this occasion expressed himself in the following language, which presents many suggestions, applicable to the subject now under consideration. "If" (said he) "an action be

¹ See 1 Pothier on Oblig. n. 17 to 20, and note (a); *Atwood v. Small*, 6 Clark & Finnell. 232, 233; s. c. 1 Younge, 407.

² See 2 Kent. Comm. Lect. 39, p. 482, 483 (4th edit.); *Hill v. Gray*, 1 Starke, 352. [*Hill v. Gray* has sometimes been doubted; but, as it is explained in the late case of *Keates v. Cadogan*, 2 Eng. Law & Eq. 321, it is in harmony with the current of authorities.] *Post*, § 212 a.

³ See *Trower v. Newcome*, 3 Meriv. 704; *Scott v. Hanson*, 1 Simons, 13; *Fentone v. Brown*, 14 Ves. 144; 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 484, 485 (4th edit.); *id.* 486, 487, note (b); *Davis v. Meeker*, 5 Johns. 354; *Hervey v. Young*, Yelv. 21, and Metcalf's note; 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 2 § 11, art. 11, 12; *Sherwood v. Salmon*, Day, 128. See *Juzan v. Toulmin*, 9 Ala. 662.

maintainable for such a false representation of the will and purpose of another, with reference to the proposed sale, should not an action be also at least equally maintainable for a false representation of the party's own purpose? But can it be contended, that an action might be maintained against a man for representing that he would not give, upon a treaty of purchase, beyond a certain sum, when it could be proved that he had said he would give much more than that sum? And supposing, also, that he had upon such treaty added, as a reason for his resolving not to give beyond a certain sum, that the property was, in his judgment, damaged in any particular respect; and supposing, further, that it could be proved he had, just before the giving such reason, said he was satisfied it was not so damaged; would an action be maintainable for this untrue representation of his own purpose, backed and enforced by this false reason given for it? And, in the case before us, does the false representation, made by the defendant, of the determination of his partners, amount to any thing more than a falsely alleged reason for the limited amount of his own offer? And if it amount to no more than this, it should be shown, before we can deem this to be the subject of an action, that, in respect of some consideration or other, existing between the parties to the treaty, or upon some general rule or principle of law, the party treating for a purchase is bound to allege, truly, if he state at all, the motives which operate with him for treating, or for making the offer, he in fact makes. A seller is unquestionably liable to an action of deceit, if he fraudulently represent the quality of the thing sold to be other than it is, in some particulars, which the buyer has not equal means with himself of knowing; or if he do so in such a manner as to induce the buyer to forbear making the inquiries, which, for his own security and advantage, he would otherwise have made. But is a buyer liable to an action of deceit for misrepresenting the seller's chance of sale, or the probability of his getting a better price for his commodity, than the price which such proposed buyer offers? I am not aware of any case, or recognized principle of law, upon which such a duty can be considered as incumbent upon a party bargaining for a purchase. It appears to be a false representation in a matter merely *gratis dictum* by the bidder, in respect to which the bidder was under no legal pledge or obligation to the seller for the precise accuracy and correctness of his statement, and upon which, therefore, it

was the seller's own indiscretion to rely; and for the consequences of which reliance, therefore, he can maintain no action."¹

§ 200. A court of equity would, under the like circumstances, probably hold a somewhat more rigorous doctrine, at least if the party appeared to have been materially influenced by the representation to his disadvantage; and, if it did not avoid the contract, it would refuse a specific performance of it.² If the seller of a farm should falsely affirm, at the sale, that it had been valued by two persons at the price, and the assertion had induced the buyer to purchase it, the contract would certainly not be enforced in equity; and, upon principle, it would seem to be void. So, if a vendor, on a treaty for the sale of property, should make representations which he knows to be false, the falsehood of which, however, the purchaser has no means of knowing, but he relies on them, a court of equity will rescind the contract entered into upon such treaty, although the contract may not contain the misrepresentations.³ But then, in all such cases, the court will not rescind the contract without the clearest proof of the fraudulent misrepresentations, and that they were made under such circumstances as show that the contract was founded upon them.⁴

§ 200 a. On the other hand, if the purchaser, choosing to judge for himself, does not avail himself of the knowledge or means of knowledge open to him or his agents, he cannot be heard to say that he was deceived by the vendor's misrepresentations; for the rule is *caveat emptor*, and the knowledge of his agents is as binding on him as his own knowledge.⁵ It is his own folly and laches not to use the means of knowledge within his reach, and he may properly impute any loss or injury, in such a case, to his own negligence and indiscretion.⁶ Courts of equity do not sit for the purpose of relieving parties, under ordinary circumstances, who refuse to exercise a reasonable diligence or discretion.

¹ *Vernon v. Keys*, 12 East, 637, 638; *Sugden on Vendors* (7th edit.), p. 6. See also *Davis v. Meeker*, 5 Johns. 354; 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 486, and note (b); id. 487 (4th edit.); *Maddeford v. Austwick*, 1 Sim. 89.

² 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 486, 487, and note (b), (4th edit.); *Buxton v. Lister*, 3 Atk. 386.

³ *Atwood v. Small*, 6 Clark & Fennell. 232, 233.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ [In *Spalding v. Hedges*, 2 Barr, 240, it was held that, if a party made false representations of a fact as to land situated in a distant country, it is immaterial that the other party had correct sources of information.]

§ 201. To the same ground of unreasonable indiscretion and confidence, may be referred the common language of puffing and commendation of commodities, which, however, reprehensible in morals, as gross exaggerations, or departures from truth, are nevertheless not treated as frauds which will avoid contracts. In such cases the other party is bound; and indeed is understood, to exercise his own judgment, if the matter is equally open to the observation, examination, and skill of both. To such cases the maxim applies: *Simplex commendatio non obligat*. The seller represents the qualities or value of the commodity, and leaves them to the judgment of the buyer.¹ The Roman law adopted the same doctrine. “*Ea quæ commendandi causâ in venditionibus dicuntur, si palam appareant, venditorem non obligant; veluti, si dicat servum speciosum, domum bene ædificatam.*”² But, if the means of knowledge are not equally open, the same law pronounced a different doctrine. “*At, si dixerit, hominem literatum, vel artificem præstare debet; nam hoc ipso pluris vendidit.*”³ The misrepresentation enhances the price. The same rule will apply if any artifice is used to disguise the character or quality of the commodity;⁴ or to mislead the buyer at the sale; such as using puffers⁵ and underbidders at an auction, or other sale; or holding out false colors, and thereby taking the buyer by surprise.⁶

§ 202. In the next place, the party must be misled by the misrepresentation; for, if he knows it to be false, when made, it cannot be said to influence his conduct; and it is his own indiscretion, and not any fraud or surprise, of which he has any just complaint to make under such circumstances.⁷

¹ 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 485 (4th edit.).

² Dig. Lib. 18, tit. 1, l. 43.

³ Ibid.

⁴ 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 482, 483, 484 (4th edit.); *Turner v. Harvey*, Jacob, 178.

⁵ [But quære, whether “using puffers” is alone sufficient to rescind a sale, unless the purchaser was induced thereby to pay more than the article was worth; or at least more than he would otherwise have given. See *Tomlinson v. Savage*, 6 Ired. Eq. 430; *Latham v. Morrow*, 6 B Monroe, 630; *Veazie v. Williams*, 3 Story, 623; *Wolfe v. Luyster*, 1 Hall, 146; *National Fire Ins. Co. v. Loomis*, 11 Paige, 431.]

⁶ *Bramley v. Alt*, 3 Ves. 624; *Smith v. Clarke*, 12 Ves. 483; *Twining v. Morrice*, 2 Bro. Ch. 330; *Marquis of Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 338; *Bexwell v. Christie*, Cowper, 395; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 4, note (x); *Pickering v. Dawson*, 4 Taunt. 785.

⁷ See *Pothier de Vente*, n. 210.

§ 203. And in the next place, the party must have been misled to his prejudice or injury; for courts of equity do not, any more than courts of law, sit for the purpose of enforcing moral obligations, or correcting unconscientious acts, which are followed by no loss or damage. It has been very justly remarked, that, to support an action at law for a misrepresentation, there must be a fraud committed by the defendant, and a damage resulting from such fraud to the plaintiff.¹ And it has been observed with equal truth, by a very learned judge in equity, that fraud and damage coupled together will entitle the injured party to relief in any court of justice.²

§ 203 a. In the next place the defrauded party may by his subsequent acts, with full knowledge of the fraud, deprive himself of all right to relief as well in equity as at law. Thus, for example, if with full knowledge of the fraud, he should settle the matter in relation to which the fraud was committed, and give a release to the party who has defrauded him, he would lose all title to legal and equitable relief.³ The like rule would apply, if he knew all the facts, and with such full information he continued to deal with the party.⁴

[* § 203 b. In a late case, where this subject is a good deal examined, and the English cases from the earliest date reviewed, and much of the learning of the civil law discussed, at the bar, in the Court of Appeal, before the lords justices, it was held, that misrepresentations, to constitute sufficient grounds for setting aside a purchase, must be material, as being of such a nature as, if true, to add to the value; must not be evidently mere conjectural statements, and must be made without a belief in their truth, and without reasonable grounds for such belief. And where advertisements for the sale of shares in a mine contained unfounded statements, but the purchaser had not relied upon them, and had had opportunities of judging of their accuracy, it was held no sufficient ground for rescinding the contract. In suits for rescinding con-

¹ *Vernon v. Keys*, 12 East, 637, 638.

² *Bacon v. Bronson*, 7 Johns. Chan. 201; *Fellows v. Lord Gwydyr*, 1 Simons, 63; *Turnbull v. Gadsden*, 2 Strobb. Eq. 14.

³ *Parsons v. Hughes*, 9 Paige, 591.

⁴ *Vigers v. Pike*, 3 Clark & Finnell. 545, 630. See *Jackson v. Summerville*, 1 Harris, 359; *Dingley v. Robinson*, 5 Greenl. 127; *Duncan v. McCullough*, 4 S. & R. 483; *Adams v. Shelby*, 10 Ala. 478; *Galloway v. Holmes*, 2 Dougl. 330.

tracts on the ground of fraud, particularly where the subject is of variable value, it is the duty of the plaintiff to put forward his complaint at the earliest possible period.¹ But where the particulars of a sale stated that the premises were in the occupation of C., at a rental of £42 per annum, and the fact proved to be that C. was not tenant to the vendors, but occupied the premises adversely to them; it was held, that this amounted to such bad faith, as to justify the court in releasing the party from his contract.² And where a purchaser, under a decree, discovered that a will had been misstated in the abstract, so as to conceal an important defect in the title, he having before accepted the title and paid the purchase-money; he was, upon petition, before conveyance, discharged from his purchase, and the purchase-money ordered to be repaid.³ But as the solicitor had neglected to examine the original will, notwithstanding the abstract showed that it was of a very peculiar nature, and he had been reminded of the necessity of doing so, by the counsel who advised upon the abstract, it was considered that he was not entitled to interest, and that he must pay the costs of all parties except the person who had the conduct of the sale.⁴

§ 203 *c.* And in another case⁵ of still later date, before the House of Lords, it is said that misrepresentation, entitling to relief in equity, must be as to matter of fact, and not merely a conclusion of opinion. And it is here further said, that when a case is constituted of fraud, it should be most accurately and fully stated. A mere general statement, that something has been done by, or obtained from, a party, under the influence of fraud, is not sufficient; it must be shown of what it consists, and how it has been effected. And when such a charge is made and fails of proof, it ought to fail with the ordinary penalty of the court, directing the party who makes it without ground to indemnify his antagonist in costs.

¹ [* *Jennings v. Broughton*, 5 De G., M. & G. 126. See also *Bartlett v. Salmon*, 6 De G., M. & G., 38; *post*, § 1537; *Farebrother v. Gibson*, 1 De Gex & Jones, 602.

² *Lachlan v. Reynolds*, Kay, 52.

³ *M'Culloch v. Gregory*, 1 Kay & Johnson, 286. See also *Ward v. Trathen*, 14 Simons, 82.

⁴ *Deverell v. Lord Bolton*, 18 Vesey, 505; *Stewart v. Alliston*, 1 Mer. 33. See also *Harrison v. Coppard*, 2 Cox, 318.

⁵ *New Brunswick & Canada Railw. & Land Co. v. Conybeare*, 6 Law T. n. s. 109; s. c. 9 Ho. Lds. Cas. 711. It is here said that the bill must show, not merely of what the alleged fraud consists, but how it was effected.

§ 203 d. Where property is bought at an under price, through the misrepresentation of an agent who derived no pecuniary advantage from the transaction, the principal is responsible. And where the same plaintiff had been induced to part with his property, at such undervalue, at two different times, through the misrepresentation of two different agents of the same principal, one bill may be brought to set aside both transactions, although in themselves wholly distinct, and the same will not be demurrable for multifariousness.¹

§ 203 e. Brokers who sell their own property under the delusion upon the mind of the purchaser that they are sold on behalf of other parties, whereby the purchaser is induced either to make the purchase, which he otherwise would not have done, or to give a higher price than he would otherwise have done, are guilty of such a fraud as will induce a court of equity to set the contract aside.²

§ 203 f. There is a late case in Kentucky³ where the question arose how far the seller of a store of goods, at cost and carriage, was bound by an assertion that "it amounted to three thousand five hundred dollars," when as afterwards ascertained it did not exceed two thousand dollars, where the view of the court seems to us exceedingly just and sensible. It was here held, that where a confiding vendee had no fitting or reasonable opportunity to examine sufficiently for himself the goods constituting a retail store, and decided on his own judgment, a positive assurance and assertion by the vendor, "that the cost and carriage of the goods amounted to three thousand five hundred dollars," when in fact it did not exceed two thousand dollars, may be either actual or constructive fraud according to circumstances. When the vendor knew or believed that it was not true, the affirmation was actually fraudulent; and even if he believed it to be true, it might be constructively fraudulent; for unless he knew it to be true, his duty was, in good faith, to express candidly his mere opinion, which ought not to disarm the vendee or lull his prudent vigilance, and on which opinion he therefore acts at his peril, and, therefore, a

¹ *Walsham v. Stainton*, 9 Jur. n. s. 1261; s. c. before V. C. Wood, 1 Hen. & M. 322, 8 Law T. n. s. 633, 1 De G. & S. 678.

² *Maturin v. Tredinnick*, 9 Law T. n. s. 82.

³ *Morehead v. Eades*, 3 Bush, 121. See also *per contra*, *Fish v. Cleland*, 33 Ill. 238.

positive affirmation, under such circumstances, if untrue, or if the vendor did not know it to be true, was both reckless and deceptive, and the party should be held bound by it to the extent of making good any deficiency afterwards proved to exist, provided the assertion was made expecting to influence the conduct of the other party, and it did have the desired effect. If every court in the land had the nerve to adopt such searching and practical views upon this subject, we should find honesty and fair dealing greatly promoted by it.¹

¹ See the opinion of the court by Mr. Justice Robertson. But where the party complaining had full opportunity to examine the subject-matter of the contract and did so examine and trusted to his own judgment and not the representations of the other party the courts of equity can afford no relief, even where there were material facts concealed. *Stevens v. Orman*, 10 Fa. 9. But this will depend somewhat upon the nature of the facts concealed, and how far the plaintiff was really misled to his own detriment and without fault on his part. The facts of the case last cited were somewhat similar to those in *Morehead v. Eades*, *supra*, and the court refused relief here on the ground that the facts were open to the inspection of both parties. But it is questionable how far that should excuse the party for obtaining an unjust advantage, either by suppression of the truth or suggestion of falsehood, unless the other party is guilty of unwarrantable disregard of the most obvious precautions to secure his own interests. The courts should not be required to be more careful to protect the interests of a party than he is to protect himself, perhaps; but all attempts to excuse courts from affording relief, in clear cases of fraud and injustice, upon the ground that the party did not exercise all the vigilance which every one now sees he might have done, have a very lame and unsatisfactory relish about them, while, on the contrary, no one is ever heard to complain of courts affording relief in such cases, unless it be the parties guilty of such fraudulent misconduct, and they generally praise the court for what they must in their inner consciousness despise.

There is a late case in Pennsylvania. *Hanner v. Fisher*, 58 Penn. St. 453, where one attempted to collect a debt of his debtor who was either unable or unwilling to pay it, by resorting to the device of assigning the debt to an agent and also furnishing him with \$10 in money to enable him to purchase the debtor's horse, on credit, paying the \$10 in hand and tendering, at a subsequent day, the debt in satisfaction of the balance, which the vendor refused to accept. The court held the whole transaction to be void, and that the title did not pass, which seems eminently just and reasonable.

In another case, *Batdorf v. Albert*, 59 Penn. St. 59, the question of what will amount to notice of fraud is considerably discussed. The record of a deed is declared to be notice only to those so connected with the title as to be bound to search for it. To affect one with notice by implication there must be some reason to awaken inquiry and to render the inquiry a duty, and such as would lead to the knowledge of the essential fact. There must be some act or declaration

§ 203 g. The cases are very numerous in the late American reports, where courts of equity have been asked to set aside conveyances upon the ground of inequality between the price and the value of the property, and where there has been more or less of misrepresentation or concealment. The courts have generally manifested a creditable degree of readiness to interfere in this class of cases, where the proof was clear and satisfactory in every respect, and there was no suspicion of misconduct or unwarrantable supineness on the part of the person complaining.¹ In this latter case, the court declined to enforce the rule of damages agreed to by the parties upon the ground that the entire contract was procured by fraud. And where the owner of land allowed another to buy it at a tax sale, and let the time of redemption expire, upon the ground that the purchaser promised to convey the title to him, and then declined to do so after having acquired it, the court decreed the release of the title.² But the court will not set aside a sale at the instance of the vendor because the

from an authentic source which a person would be careless to disregard. See also *Brandon v. Forest County*, 59 Penn. St. 187. And in *Watts v. Cummins*, id. 84, it is declared that if a contract is based upon mutual misapprehension of the parties as to the fundamental facts of the transactions, courts of equity will interfere or where one party by trusting to the other omitted to make inquiry and so acted under a delusion. The effect of withholding information by one party to a contract, in rendering the contract invalid, depends largely upon his estimate of the reliance the other party will make upon that point. *Thompson v. Lambert*, I. R. 2 Eq. 433. An antenuptial settlement upon the intended wife by the husband will not be upheld if intended by both parties to defeat or delay creditors. *Bulmer v. Hunter*, L. R. 8 Eq. 46. See also *Gibson v. Head*, 17 W. R. 986. A representation made by the vendor of land to the vendees that it contained fifteen hundred acres, upon which the vendees close the purchase, when in fact it contained but one thousand acres, will entitle the vendees to rescind, notwithstanding it was made in good faith by the vendor, upon belief in the representations of his vendor; and in such case the vendees will have a lien upon the vendor's interest in the land for the reimbursement of their advances. *Aberaman Iron Works Co. v. Wickens*, Lord Chancellor, 17 W. R. 211; s. c. Law R. 4 Ch. App. 101. See also *Bartletts' Case*, 17 W. R. 131. If the donee of a power make an appointment with an intent and purpose not authorized by the power such appointment will be set aside, although it be in terms within the power, and the appointee be not cognizant of the unauthorized intent. *Topham v. Duke of Portland*, 18 W. R. 235.

¹ *Wambaugh v. Bimer*, 25 Ind. 368. But see *Bd. Comm'rs v. Younger*, 29 Calf. 172.

² *Laing v. McKee*, 13 Mich. 124.

vendee misrepresented the chances of sale or the probability of obtaining a better price.^{1]}

§ 204. Another class of cases for relief in equity is, where there is an undue concealment, or *suppressio veri*, to the injury or prejudice of another.² It is not every concealment, even of facts material to the interest of a party, which will entitle him to the interposition of a court of equity. The case must amount to the suppression of facts, which one party, under the circumstances, is bound in conscience and duty to disclose to the other party, and in respect to which he cannot innocently be silent.³ It has been said by Cicero, “Aliud est celare, aliud tacere. Neque enim id est celare, quidquid reticeas; sed cum, quod tu scias, id ignorare emolumenti tui causâ velis eos, quorum intersit id scire.”⁴ It has been remarked by a learned author, that this definition of concealment, restrained to the efficient motives and precise subject of any contract, will generally hold to make it void in favor of either party, who is misled by his ignorance of the thing concealed.⁵ And Cicero proceeds to denounce such concealment in terms of vehement indignation. “Hoc autem celandi genus quale sit, et cujus hominis, quis non videt? Certè non aperti, non simplicis, non ingenui, non justis, non viri boni; versuti potius, obscuri, astuti, fallacis, malitiosi, callidi, veteratoris, vafri.”⁶

§ 205. But this statement is not borne out by the acknowledged doctrines, either of courts of law, or of equity, in a great variety of cases. However correct Cicero's view may be of the duty of every man, in point of morals, to disclose all facts to another, with whom he is dealing, which are material to his interest;⁷ yet,

¹ Fish v. Cleland, 33 Ill. 238. See also Grove v. Hodges, 55 Penn. St. 504.]

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 8, and note (z); id. ch. 3, § 4, and notes; Jarvis v. Duke, 1 Vern. 19; Evans v. Bicknell, 6 Ves. 173, 182. Sometimes, as in the case of Broderick v. Broderick (1 P. Will. 239, 240), there may occur both a *suppressio veri* and a *suggestio falsi*.

³ [Irvine v. Kirkpatrick, 3 Eng. Law & Eq. 17; Juzan v. Toulmin, 9 Ala. 662. See Vane v. Cobbold, 1 Exch. 798, for an instance of an omission to communicate facts which did not amount to a legal fraud.]

⁴ Cic. de Offic. Lib. 3, ch. 12, 13. See also Pothier de Vente, n. 242, 243.

⁵ Marshall on Insur. B. 1, ch. 11, § 3, p. 473.

⁶ Cic. de Offic. Lib. 3, cap. 13.

⁷ Dr. Paley adopts Cicero's doctrine in its full extent, as a duty of moral and religious obligation. “To advance (says he) a direct falsehood in recommendation of our wares, by ascribing to them some quality, which we know they have not, is dishonest. Now, compare with this the designed concealment of some

it is by no means true, that courts of justice generally, or, at least, in England and America, undertake the exercise of such a wide and difficult jurisdiction.¹ Thus it has been held by Lord Thurlow (and the case falls precisely within the definition by Cicero of undue concealment), that if A., knowing there to be a mine in the land of B., of which he knows B. to be ignorant, should, concealing the fact, enter into a contract to purchase the estate of B. for a price which the estate would be worth without considering the mine, the contract would be good; because A., as the buyer, is not obliged, from the nature of the contract, to make the discovery. In such cases the question is not, whether an advantage has been taken, which in point of morals is wrong, or which a man of delicacy would not have taken. But it is essentially necessary, in order to set aside the transaction, not only that a great advantage should be taken, but, also, that there should be some obligation on the party to make the discovery. A court of equity will not correct or avoid a contract merely because a man of nice honor would not have entered into it. The case must fall within some definition of fraud; and the rule must be drawn, so as not to affect the general transactions of mankind.² And this, in effect, is the conclusion to which Pothier arrived, after a good deal of struggle, in adjusting the duties arising from moral obligation with the necessary freedom and convenience of the common business of human life.³

§ 206. Mr. Chancellor Kent, in his learned commentaries, after admitting the doctrine and authority of Lord Thurlow, in the case above stated, concludes with the following acute and practical

fault, which we know they have. The motives and the effects of actions are the only points of comparison, in which their moral quality can differ. But the motives in these two cases are the same, namely, to produce a higher price than we expect otherwise to obtain; the effect, that is, the prejudice, to the buyer is the same." Paley, *Moral Philos.* B. 3, ch. 7, p. 116. The question, What degree of concealment is unjust in a legal or moral sense? has been often mooted by distinguished jurists, as well upon the cases put by Cicero, as in other cases. See Grotius, B. 2, ch. 12, § 9; Pufendorf, *Law of Nature*, B. 5, ch. 3, § 4; Pothier de Vente, n. 233 to 242; id. n. 297, 298; 2 Kent, *Comm. Lect.* 39, p. 485 to 491 (4th edit.), and notes; 1 Ruth. *Inst.* B. 1, ch. 13, § 11 to 19.

¹ See Pothier, *Contrat de Vente*, n. 234, 239, 242, 243; 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 2, § 11; 2 Kent, *Comm. Lect.* 39 p. 484, 485, 490, 491, and note (c), 4th edit.

² Fox v. Mackreth, 2 Bro. Ch. 420; 1 White and Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas. 72, and note; Turner v. Harvey, 1 Jacob, 178.

³ Pothier de Vente, n. 234 to 242; id. n. 295 to 299; *an'c.* § 194.

reflections: "From this and other cases it would appear, that human laws are not so perfect as the dictates of conscience, and the sphere of morality is more enlarged than the limits of civil jurisdiction. There are many duties, that belong to the class of imperfect obligations, which are binding on conscience, but which human laws do not and cannot undertake directly to enforce. But, when the aid of a court of equity is sought to carry into execution such a contract, then the principles of ethics have a more extensive sway. And a purchase made with such a reservation of superior knowledge, would be of too sharp a character to be aided and forwarded in its execution by the powers of the Court of Chancery. It is a rule in equity, that all the material facts must be known to both parties, to render the agreement fair and just in all its parts; and it is against all the principles of equity, that one party, knowing a material ingredient in an agreement, should be permitted to suppress it, and still call for a specific performance."¹ The importance and value of the distinction here pointed out will be made more apparent, when we come to the consideration of the cases, in which courts of equity refuse to decree a specific performance of contracts, which yet they will not undertake to set aside.²

§ 207. The true definition, then, of undue concealment, which amounts to a fraud in the sense of a court of equity, and for which it will grant relief, is the non-disclosure of those facts and circumstances, which one party is under some legal or equitable obligation to communicate to the other; and which the latter has a right not merely *in foro conscientie*, but *juris et de jure* to know.³ Mr. Chancellor Kent has avowed a broader doctrine. "As a general rule" (says he), "each party is bound in every case to

¹ 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 490, 491 (4th edit.); *Parker v. Grant*, 1 Johns. Ch. 630; *Ellard v. Llandaff*, 1 B. & Beatt. 250, 251.

² See 2 Story on Eq. Jurisp. § 693, 769, 770.

³ *Fox v. Mackreth*, 2 Bro. Ch. 420; 1 *White and Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas.* 72, and notes; *Irvine v. Kirkpatrick*, 3 Eng. Law & Eq. 17; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 3, §, 4, note (n). Mr. Justice Buller, in *Pearson v. Morgan*, 2 Bro. Ch. 390, said: "In cases where it [fraud] is a question of fact, it is always considered as a constructive fraud, where the party knows the truth and conceals it; and such constructive fraud always makes the party liable." But in that case the party, when applied to, misrepresented the fact, and concealed the truth; and the language must be limited to such circumstances. See *Fox v. Mackreth*, 2 Bro. Ch. 420; *Turner v. Harvey*, Jacob, 178.

communicate to the other his knowledge of material facts, provided he knows the other to be ignorant of them, and they be not open and naked, or equally within the reach of his observation."¹ This doctrine, in this latitude of expression, may, perhaps, be thought not strictly maintainable, or in conformity with that which is promulgated by courts of law or equity. For many most material facts may be unknown to one party, and known to the other, and not equally accessible, or at the moment within the reach of both; and yet contracts founded upon such ignorance on one side, and knowledge on the other, may be completely obligatory.² Thus, if one party has actual knowledge of an event or fact from private sources, not then known to the other party from whom he purchases goods, and which knowledge would materially enhance the price of the goods, or change the intention of the party as to the sale; the contract of sale of the goods will, nevertheless, be valid.³

§ 208. Even Pothier himself, strongly as he inclines, in all cases of this sort, to the principles of sound morals, declares, that the buyer cannot be heard to complain that the seller has not informed

¹ 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 482 (4th edit.) and note, *ibid.*, where it is now qualified.

² The case of the unknown mine, already put in the case of *Fox v. Mackreth*, 2 Bro. Ch. 420, seems to fall within this predicament; and in *Turner v. Harvey*, Jacob, 178, Lord Eldon said: "The court in many cases has been in the habit of saying, that, where parties deal for an estate, they may put each other at arm's length; the purchaser may use his own knowledge, and is not bound to give the vendor information of the value of the property. As in the case that has been mentioned, if an estate is offered for sale, and I treat for it, knowing that there is a mine under it, and the other party makes no inquiry, I am not bound to give him any information of it. He acts for himself, and exercises his own sense and knowledge. But a very little is sufficient to affect the application of the principle. If a single word is dropped which tends to mislead the vendor, that principle will not be allowed to operate." See also *ante*, § 147 and 148.

³ See *Laidlaw v. Organ*, 2 Wheaton, 178; *Matthews v. Bliss*, 22 Pick. 48; *Fox v. Mackreth*, 2 Bro. Ch. 20. In *Laidlaw v. Organ*, 2 Wheaton, 195, the question was put in this general form: "Whether the intelligence of extrinsic circumstances, which might influence the price of the commodity, and which was exclusively within the knowledge of the vendee, ought to have been communicated by him to the vendor?" And on this question, so put, the court expressed an opinion, "that he was not bound to communicate it, without adding any qualification." But the court added: "It would be difficult to circumscribe the contrary doctrine within proper limits, where the means of intelligence are equally accessible to both parties." *Ante*, § 149.

him of circumstances extrinsic of the thing sold, whatever may be the interest which he has to know them.¹ So that the doctrine of Mr. Chancellor Kent would seem to require some qualification, by limiting it to cases where one party is under some obligation to communicate the facts, or where there is a peculiar known relation, trust, or confidence between them, which authorizes the other party to act upon the presumption that there is no concealment of any material fact. Thus, if a vendor should sell an estate, knowing that he had no title to it, or knowing that there were encumbrances on it, of which the vendee was ignorant; the suppression of such a material fact, in respect to which the vendor must know that the very purchase implied a trust and confidence on the part of the vendee, that no such defect existed, would clearly avoid the sale on the ground of fraud.²

§ 209. The like reason would apply to a case where the vendor should sell a house, situate in a distant town, which he knew at the time to be burnt down, and of which fact the vendee was ignorant; for it is impossible to suppose, that the actual existence of the house should not be understood by the vendee, as implied on the part of the vendor, at the time of the bargain.³ The same doctrine prevails in the civil law. “*Sin autem venditor quidem sciebat domum esse exustam, emptor autem ignorabat, nullam venditionem stare.*”⁴

§ 210. These latter cases are founded upon circumstances intrinsic in the contract, and constituting its essence. And there is often a material distinction between circumstances which are intrinsic, and form the very ingredients of the contract, and circumstances which are extrinsic, and form no part of it, although they may create inducements to enter into it, or affect the value or price of the thing sold.⁵ Intrinsic circumstances are properly those which belong to the nature, character, condition, title, safety, use, or enjoyment, &c., of the subject-matter of the contract; such as natural or artificial defects in the subject-matter. Extrinsic circumstances are properly those which are accidentally

¹ Pothier de Vente, n. 242, 298, 299.

² *Arnott v. Biscoe*, 1 Ves. 95, 96; Pothier de Vente, n. 240; *Pilling v. Armitage*, 12 Ves. 78; *ante*, § 142, 143.

³ See Pothier de Vente, n. 4; *ante*, § 142.

⁴ Dig. Lib. tit. 1, l. 57, § 1; *ante*, § 142.

⁵ 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 482 (4th edit.); Pothier, n. 242, 249; *id.* n. 203 to 210; 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 2, § 8, art. 11; *id.* § 11, art. 2, 3, 5, 15.

connected with it, or rather bear upon it, at the time of the contract, and may enhance or diminish its value or price, or operate as a motive to make or decline the contract; such as facts respecting the occurrence of peace or war, the rise or fall of markets, the character of the neighborhood,¹ the increase or diminution of duties, or the like circumstances.

§ 211. In regard to extrinsic, as well as to intrinsic, circumstances, the Roman law seems to have adopted a very liberal doctrine, carrying out to a considerable extent the clear dictates of sound morals. It required the utmost good faith in all cases of contracts, involving mutual interests: and it, therefore, not only prohibited the assertion of any falsehood, but also the suppression of any facts, touching the subject-matter of the contract, of which the other party was ignorant, and which he had an interest in knowing. In an especial manner it applied this doctrine to cases of sales; and required that the vendor and vendee should disclose, each to the other, every circumstance within his knowledge touching the thing sold, which either had an interest in knowing. The declaration in regard to the vendor (as we have seen) is: "Dolum malum a se abesse præstare venditor debet; qui non tantum in eo est, qui fallendi causâ obscurè loquitur; sed etiam, qui insidiosè, obscurè dissimulat;" and the same rule was applied to the vendee.² According to these principles, the vendor was by the Roman law required, not only not to conceal any defects of the thing sold, which were within his knowledge, and of which the other party was ignorant, whenever those defects might, as vices, upon the implied warranty created by the sale, entitle him to a redhibition or a rescission of the contract; but also all other defects, which the other party was interested in knowing.³

§ 212. In regard to intrinsic circumstances, the common law, however, has in many cases adopted a rule very different from that of the civil law; and especially in cases of sales of goods. In such cases, the maxim *caveat emptor* is applied; and unless there be some misrepresentation or artifice, to disguise the thing sold, or some warranty, as to its character or quality, the vendee

¹ Pothier de Vente, n. 236.

² Dig. Lib. 18, tit. 1, l. 43, § 2; Pothier de Vente, n. 233 to 241; id. n. 296; ante, § 192; Laidlaw v. Organ, 2 Wheaton, 178; Pothier de Vente, cited in note c, p. 185.

³ Pothier de Vente, n. 235.

is understood to be bound by the sale, notwithstanding there may be intrinsic defects and vices in it, known to the vendor, and unknown to the vendee, materially affecting its value. However questionable such a doctrine may be, in its origin, in point of morals or general convenience (upon which many learned doubts have, at various times, been expressed), it is too firmly established to be now open to legal controversy.¹ And courts of equity, as well as courts of law, abstain from any interference with it.

[* § 212 *a*. The rule of the common law, in regard to allowable deceit in the sale of goods, by mere silence, is, perhaps, too broadly stated here. The proposition, that there is a difference, in legal responsibility, between fraud which is effected by silence, and that which is brought about by positive misrepresentation or artifice, receives very little countenance from the English writers or judges. It is we are sorry to say, rather an American discovery, and one which ought not to gain aid, or support, from the profession, since it is based upon an obvious misapprehension. When the parties deal at arm's-length, as it is called, each trusting to his own knowledge and sagacity, there is no breach of confidence, by withholding information in regard to secret defects, known to the vendor. The seller is not, in such cases, liable for any delusion into which the purchaser may fall, unless he use some artifice to mislead him. But this rule has no just application, as it is conceded, to that class of cases, where there is a general confidence existing between the parties, growing out of some fiduciary relation. And the rule is the same, in morals, and in law, where there is a special confidence, in fact, between the parties, whether it arise from peculiar relation or not. And one who takes advantage of such special confidence, to deceive and damage another, although he is able to effect it, by mere silence, is none the less liable to an action. This is the uniform language of the English books upon the subject. The rule of the English text-writers is correctly laid down by Justice Buller,² that an action for deceit will lie, "whenever a person has, by false affirmation, or otherwise, imposed upon another to his damage, who has placed a reasonable confidence in him." And Mr. Chitty³ adopts a sim-

¹ See 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 478, 479 (4th edit.); 2 Black. Comm. 451.

² [* Bull. N. P. 30.

³ Chitt. on Cont. (Perk. ed. 1860) 753.

ilar view. "Whenever one person misrepresents, or conceals, a material fact, that is a fact which is substantially the consideration for the contract, and which is peculiarly within his own knowledge, such transaction will be void, on the ground of fraud." And Mr. Christian, in his note,¹ suggests the same view. "The concealment of a material circumstance is a fraud, which vacates the contract." The same view runs through all the English books upon this subject. Jervis, Ch. J.,² in commenting on the case of *Hill v. Gray*,³ after quoting the language of Lord Ellenborough, in deciding the latter case: "The agent ought not to have let in a suspicion, on the part of the purchaser, which he knew enhanced the price. He saw that the defendant had fallen into a delusion, in supposing the picture to be Sir Felix Agar's and yet did not remove it," himself adds: "*Not removing that delusion might be taken as equivalent to an express misrepresentation.*" This declaration of the sense of the English courts, upon the subject, so late as 1851, from so distinguished a source, certainly ought to be satisfactory to all. It should be remembered that the use of artifice has no just application to defects not discoverable, by the observation of the purchaser, but only to such as he might have detected, but for the artifice of the seller. As to defects entirely beyond the reach of his faculties of inspection, the surest artifice is perfect silence. This subject is very fairly presented by an accurate English writer.⁴ "If a vendor, having knowledge of a defect in the commodity, which cannot be obvious to the buyer, does not disclose it; or if apparent, uses artifice and conceals it, he has been guilty of a fraudulent misrepresentation." The same view is maintained by the most accurate American writers.⁵ The qualification here imposed, by the note of the learned American commentator, only restricts the application of the rule, requiring a full disclosure of secret defects, by the vendor, to cases, where the party is under some special obligation, "by confidence reposed, or otherwise," to make such disclosure. This, it will be perceived, brings the question precisely to the point where the English writers leave it. The party, who sees

¹ 2 Black. Comm. 451.

² *Keates v. Cadogan*, 2 Eng. Law & Eq. 318.

³ 1 Starkie, 434.

⁴ Hammond, *Nisi Prius*, 328.

⁵ 2 Kent's Comm. 482 and note; *ante*, § 207.

that a confidence is created, that the other party has fallen into a delusion in consequence, is bound, in morals, and in law, either to destroy the confidence, or else to remove the delusion.¹ So late as 1855, a very eminent equity judge, Sir John Romilly, master of the rolls, thus states the rule of good faith between vendor and purchaser of real estate; and we see no reason why one should be held to any less rigid good faith in the sale of personal, than of real estate: "It is not generally the duty of a purchaser to inform the vendor of any of the circumstances he may be acquainted with, which may make it desirable for him [the purchaser] to purchase any property, or may make it available." This was a case where the first mortgagee had found an opportunity to sell the estate, and purchased in the second mortgage without disclosing that fact. But, said the learned judge, "if on the purchase there is an express statement of fact on either side which causes the contract to be made, and on the faith of which alone the contract is made, and that fact is either false, — or if there is a fact which it is well known will prevent the contract, and which is suppressed for that purpose, it might render void the whole transaction; but this would depend on the circumstances and facts of the case."²]

¹ Bruce v. Ruler, 2 Man. & Ry. 3; Fitzsimmons v. Joslin, 21 Vt. 129; Hanson v. Edgerly, 9 Foster, 343; Bank of the Republic v. Baxter, 31 Vt. 101. The last case is where a person, in good credit and entirely solvent, had been accustomed to have his checks, for the day, certified good by the teller of the bank in the morning. He continued the same course of business, after he had, in fact, become hopelessly insolvent, without disclosing the fact to the bank, and made use of the checks, as a means of preferring his creditors. It was held to be such a fraud as rendered the transaction void between the parties, and as being equivalent to a positive representation of solvency, although nothing was in fact said upon the subject by either party at the time the credit was given. See also Allen v. Addington, 7 Wendell, 10; s. c. 11 Wendell, 374. This subject is fully examined and the authorities compared, in Paddock v. Strobridge, 29 Vt. 470. And in the case of Laidlaw v. Organ, 2 Wheaton, 178 (the case which seems to have created most of the confusion upon this subject in this country), although the delusion under which the seller labored was in regard to extraneous circumstances, merely, and there was no direct evidence of misrepresentation or artifice on the part of the vendor, still the court held that the positive direction given to the jury, in the circuit court, was not warranted, and that the question, "whether any imposition was practised, ought to have been submitted to the jury."

² Dolman v. Nokes, 22 Beavan, 402, 407; post, § 1536. But if the defendant saw fit to purchase a lease of mines upon his own examination, he cannot

§ 213. In regard to intrinsic circumstances generally, courts of equity, as well as courts of law, seem to adopt the same maxim to a large extent, and relax its application, only when there are circumstances of peculiar trust or confidence, or relation between the parties.¹

§ 214. But there are cases of intrinsic circumstances, in which courts of law and courts of equity both proceed upon a doctrine strictly analogous to that of the Roman law, and treat the concealment of them as a breach of trust and confidence justly reposed. Indeed, in most cases of this sort, the very silence of the party must import as much as a direct affirmation, and be deemed equivalent to it.²

§ 215. Thus, if a party taking a guaranty from a surety, conceals from him facts which go to increase his risk, and suffers him to enter into the contract under false impressions, as to the real state of the facts, such a concealment will amount to a fraud, because the party is bound to make the disclosure; and the omission to make it, under such circumstances, is equivalent to an affirma-

resist specific performance of the contract, because the plaintiff did not inform him that he had before worked the mines and found them unprofitable. *Haywood v. Cope*, 25 Beavan, 140. See also *Bartlett v. Salmon*, 6 De G., M. & G. 33. In *Drummond v. Tracy*, 6 Jur. n. s. 369, it is decided, that a vendor is bound, irrespective of Lord St. Leonard's Act, to inform a purchaser of an equitable encumbrance upon the land, and by parity of reason of any known defect in the title, in selling one's interest merely. And it will not excuse one who thus creates a false impression in regard to title by mere silence, that he was no way connected with the original contract, if the title was conveyed by him and the suppressed encumbrance was also created by him. Nor can he excuse himself upon the score of forgetfulness, and good faith. *Slim v. Croucher*, 6 Jur. n. s. 190.]

¹ The case of *Martin v. Morgan*, 1 Brod. & Bing. 289, is a strong application of the doctrine of concealment, avoiding a payment. In that case there was no special confidence between the parties; but a post-dated check being paid to the holder by a banker, at the time when the latter had no funds of the drawer, and the holder knew that the drawer had become insolvent, of which the banker was ignorant, the amount was allowed to be recovered back on account of the concealment.

² See *Martin v. Morgan*, 1 Brod. & Bing. 289; *Pidcock v. Bishop*, 3 B. & Cressw. 605. See *Owen v. Homan*, 3 Eng. Law & Eq. 121; 3 Mac. & Gord. 378; *Squire v. Whitton*, 1 House of Lord's Cases, 333; 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 483; *id.* 488, note (4th edit.); *Smith v. Bank of Scotland*, 1 Dow, Parl. 292, 294; *Etting v. Bank of United States*, 11 Wheaton, 59; [* *Carew's case*, 7 De G., M. & G. 43.]

tion that the facts do not exist.¹ So, if a party knowing himself to be cheated by his clerk, and, concealing the fact, applies for security in such a manner, and under such circumstances, as holds the clerk out to others as one whom he considers as a trustworthy person; and another person becomes his security, acting under the impression that the clerk is so considered by his employer; the contract of suretyship will be void;² for the very silence, under such circumstances, becomes expressive of a trust and confidence held out to the public, equivalent to an affirmation.

§ 216. Cases of insurance afford a ready illustration of the same doctrine. In such cases the underwriter necessarily reposes a trust and confidence in the insured, as to all facts and circumstances affecting the risk, which are peculiarly within his knowledge, and which are not of a public and general nature, or which the underwriter either knows, or is bound to know.³ Indeed, most of the facts and circumstances which may affect the risk, are generally within the knowledge of the insured only; and therefore, the underwriter may be said emphatically to place trust and confidence in him as to all such matters. And hence, the general principle is, that in all cases of insurance the insured is bound to communicate to the underwriter all facts and circumstances, material to the risk, within his knowledge; and if they are withheld, whether the concealment be by design or by accident, it is equally fatal to the contract.⁴

§ 217. The same principle applies in all cases where the party is under an obligation to make a disclosure, and conceals material

¹ *Pidcock v. Bishop*, 3 B. & Cressw. 605. See *Owen v. Homan*, 3 Eng. Law & Eq. 121; 25 id. 1; 4 House of Lord's Cases, 997; *Squire v. Whitton*, 1 id. 333; *Railton v. Matthews*, 10 Clark & Finn. 935; *Hamilton v. Watson*, 12 id. 119; *North British Ins. Co. v. Lloyd*, 28 Eng. Law & Eq. 456; 10 Exch. 523, where the language used in *Pidcock v. Bishop* is somewhat limited. *Evans v. Kneeland*, 9 Ala. 42; *Leith Banking Co. v. Bell*, 8 Shaw & Dunlop, 721; *post*, § 383; [* *Carew's case*, 7 De G., M. & G. 43.]

² *Maltby's case*, cited 1 Dow, Parl. Cas. 294; 11 Wheaton, 68, note (d); *Smith v. Bank of Scotland*, 1 Dow, Parl. Cas. 272. See *Etting v. Bank of United States*, 11 Wheaton, 59; *Franklin Bank v. Cooper*, 36 Maine, 195.

³ *Marshall on Ins.* B. 1, ch. 11, § 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*; *Lindenau v. Desborough*, 8 B. & Cressw. 586, 592; 2 Kent, Comm. Lect. 39, p. 488, note (4th edit.). It has been remarked by Lord Eldon, that concealment is of different natures: an intentional concealment, and an actual concealment, where there may be an obligation not to conceal, even if a disclosure is not required. *Walker v. Symonds*, 3 Swanst. 62.

facts. Therefore, if a release is obtained from a party in ignorance of material facts, which it is the duty of the other side to disclose, the release will be held invalid.¹ So, in cases of family agreements and compromises, if there is any concealment of material facts, the compromise will be held invalid, upon the ground of mutual trust and confidence reposed between the parties.² And, in like manner, if a devisee, by concealing from the heir the fact that the will has not been duly executed, procures from the latter a release of his title, pretending that it will facilitate the raising of money to pay the testator's debts, the release will be void on account of the fraudulent concealment.³

§ 218. But by far the most comprehensive class of cases of undue concealment arises from some peculiar relation, or fiduciary character between the parties. Among this class of cases are to be found those which arise from the relation of client and attorney, principal and agent, principal and surety, landlord and tenant, parent and child, guardian and ward, ancestor and heir, husband and wife, trustee and *cestui que trust*, executors or administrators and creditors, legatees or distributees, appointer and appointee under powers, and partners and part-owners. In these, and the like cases, the law, in order to prevent undue advantage, from the unlimited confidence, affection, or sense of duty, which the relation naturally creates, requires the utmost degree of good faith (*uberrima fides*) in all transactions between the parties. If there is any misrepresentation, or any concealment of a material fact, or any just suspicion of artifice or undue influence, courts of equity will interpose, and pronounce the transaction void, and, as far as possible, restore the parties to their original rights.⁴

§ 219. This subject will naturally come in review in a subsequent page, when we come to consider what may be deemed the peculiar equities between parties in these predicaments, and the guards which are interposed by the law by way of prohibition

¹ *Bowles v. Stewart*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 209, 224; *Broderick v. Broderick*, 1 P. Will. 240; *ante*, § 147, 148, 196, 197. See *Roddy v. Williams*, 3 Jones & Lat. 1.

² *Gordon v. Gordon*, 3 Swanst. 399, 463, 467, 470, 473, 476, 477; *Leonard v. Leonard*, 2 B. & Beatt. 171, 180, 181, 182.

³ *Broderick v. Broderick*, 1 P. Will. 239, 249.

⁴ See *Ormand v. Hutchinson*, 13 Ves. 51; *Beaumont v. Boulton*, 5 Ves. 485; *Gartside v. Isherwood*, 1 Bro. Ch. App. 558, 560, 561.

upon their transactions.¹ It may suffice here, merely by way of illustration, to suggest a few applications of the doctrine. Thus, for instance, if an attorney, employed by the party, should designedly conceal from his client a material fact or principle of law, by which he should gain an interest not intended by the client, it will be held a positive fraud, and he will be treated as a mere trustee for the benefit of his client and his representatives. And, in a case of this sort, it will not be permitted to the attorney to set up his ignorance of law, or his negligence, as a defence or an excuse. It has been justly remarked, that it would be too dangerous to the interests of mankind, to allow those who are bound to advise, and who ought to be able to give good and sound advice, to take advantage of their own professional ignorance to the prejudice of others.² Attorneys must, from the nature of the relation, be held bound to give all the information which they ought to give, and not be permitted to plead ignorance of that which they ought to know.³

§ 220. In like manner, a trustee cannot, by the suppression of a fact, entitle himself to a benefit, to the prejudice of his *cestui que trust*. Thus, a creditor of the husband concealing the fact, cannot, by procuring himself, by such concealment, to be appointed the trustee of the wife, entitle himself to deduct his debt from the trust fund against the wife or her representatives, or even against the person in whose favor, and at whose instance, he has made the suppression.⁴ So, if a partner, who exclusively superintends the business and accounts of the concern, should, by concealment of the true state of the accounts and business, purchase the share of the other partner for an inadequate price, by means of such concealment, the purchase will be held void.⁵

§ 221. Having taken this general notice of cases of fraud, arising from the misrepresentation or concealment of material facts, we may now pass to the consideration of some others, which, in a moral, as well as in a legal view, seem to fall under the same predicament, that of being deemed cases of actual, intentional

¹ *Post*, § 308 to 328.

² See Lord Eldon's judgment in the House of Lords, in *Buckley v. Wilford*, 2 *Clark & Finn*. 102, 177 to 181, 183; *post*, § 311.

³ See Lord Eldon's judgment, &c., *ibid*.

⁴ *Dalbiac v. Dalbiac*, 16 *Ves*. 115, 124; *Neville v. Wilkinson*, 1 *Bro. Ch*. 548; *post*, § 321.

⁵ *Maddeford v. Austwick*, 1 *Sim*. 89. See *Smith in re Hay*, 6 *Madd*. 2.

fraud, as contradistinguished from constructive or legal fraud. In this class may properly be included all cases of unconscientious advantages in bargains, obtained by imposition, circumvention, surprise, and undue influence, over persons in general; and, in an especial manner, all unconscientious advantages or bargains, obtained over persons disabled by weakness, infirmity, age, lunacy, idiocy, drunkenness, coverture, or other incapacity, from taking due care of, or protecting their own rights and interests.¹

§ 222. The general theory of the law, in regard to acts done and contracts made by parties, affecting their rights and interests is, that in all such cases there must be a free and full consent to bind the parties. Consent is an act of reason, accompanied with deliberation, the mind weighing, as in a balance, the good and evil on each side.² And, therefore, it has been well remarked by an able commentator upon the law of nature and nations, that every true consent supposes three things: first, a physical power; secondly, a moral power; and, thirdly, a serious and free use of them.³ And Grotius has added, that what is not done with a deliberate mind does not come under the class of perfect obligations.⁴ And hence it is, that, if consent is obtained by meditated imposition, circumvention, surprise, or undue influence, it is to be treated as a delusion, and not as a deliberate and free act of the mind. For, although the law will not generally examine into the wisdom or prudence of men in disposing of their property, or in binding themselves by contracts or by other acts, yet it will not suffer them to be entrapped by the fraudulent contrivances, or cunning, or deceitful management of those who purposely mislead them.⁵

§ 223. It is upon this general ground, that there is a want of rational and deliberate consent, that the contracts and other acts of idiots, lunatics, and other persons, *non compotes mentis*, are generally deemed to be invalid in courts of equity.⁶ Grotius has,

¹ See *Gartside v. Isherwood*, 1 Bro. Ch. 558, 560, 561.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 3; Grotius de Jure Belli, Lib. 2, ch. 11, § 5.

³ Pufendorf, Law of Nat. and Nations, Barbeyrac's note 1, B. 3, ch. 6, § 3, cited 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1, note (a).

⁴ Grotius de Jure Belli et Pacis, Lib. 2, ch. 11, § 4.

⁵ See Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 3, note (r), (u); id. § 8; *Warner v. Daniels*, 1 Wood. & Min. 103.

⁶ [As to want of consent arising from partial insanity, monomania, delusion, &c., see *Waring v. Waring*, 12 Jurist, 947; 6 Moore, P. C. 341. See also *Creagh v. Blood*, 2 Jones & Lat. 509.]

with great propriety, insisted, that it is a part of the law of nature ; or (says he) the use of reason is the first requisite to constitute the obligation of a promise, which idiots, madmen, and infants are consequently incapable of making. “Primum requiritur usus rationis ; ideo, et furiosi, et amentis, et infantis nulla est promissio.”¹ The civil law has emphatically adopted the same principle. “Furiosus” (say the Institutes) “nullum negotium gerere potest, quia non intelligit, quod agit.”² And afterwards, in the same work, distinguishing infants from pupils (technically so called), the civil law proceeds to declare, that infants are in the like situation as madmen : “Nam infans, et qui infantia, proximus est, non multum a furioso distat ; quia hujus modi ætatis pupilli nullum habent intellectum.”³

§ 224. The doctrine laid down in the older writers upon the common law is not materially different. Bracton says : “Furiosus autem stipulari non potest, nec aliquod negotium agere, quia non intelligit, quid agit. Eodem modo, nec infans, vel qui infanti proximus est, et qui multum a furioso non distat, nisi hoc fiat ad commodum suum et cum tutoris auctoritate.”⁴ And Fleta repeatedly uses language to the same effect.⁵

§ 225. Yet, clear as this doctrine appears, in common sense and common justice, it has met with a sturdy opposition from the common lawyers, who have insisted (as has been justly remarked) in defiance of natural justice, and the universal practice of all the civilized nations in the world,⁶ that, according to a known maxim of the common law, no man of full age should be admitted to disable or stultify himself ; and that a court of equity could not relieve against a maxim of the common law.⁷ And a distinction has

¹ De Jure Belli, Grotius, B. 2, ch. 11, § 5.

² Inst. Lib. 3, tit. 20, § 8 ; Dig. Lib. 50, tit. 17, l. 5, l. 40.

³ Inst. Lib. 3, tit. 20, § 10 ; Dig. Lib. 50, tit. 17, l. 5, l. 40 ; 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 2, § 1, art. 11, 12. See Ersk. Inst. B. 1, tit. 7, § 51, p. 160 ; B. 3, tit. 1, § 15, p. 485.

⁴ Bracton, Lib. 3, ch. 2, § 8, p. 100.

⁵ Fleta, Lib. 2, ch. 56, § 19 ; id. Lib. 3, ch. 3, § 10 ; Beverley's case, 4 Co. 126.

⁶ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1.

⁷ See Sugden on Powers, ch. 7, § 1. The best defence of the maxim which I have seen, is in 3 Bac. Abridg. Idiots and Lunatics, F., where it is put upon the ground of public policy to favor alienations. Yet it seems wholly unsatisfactory in principle. Mr. Evans has exposed the absurdity of the maxim in a few striking remarks, in his note to Pothier on Oblig. Vol. 2, App. No. 3, p. 28.

been taken between the party himself, and his privies in blood (heirs) and privies in representation (executors and administrators). For it has not been doubted, that privies in blood and privies in representation might, after the death of the insane party, avoid his contract, or other acts, upon the ground that he was *non compos mentis*.¹ How so absurd and mischievous a maxim could have found its way into any system of jurisprudence, professing to act upon civilized beings, is a matter of wonder and humiliation.² There have been many struggles against it by eminent lawyers in all ages of the common law; but it is, perhaps, somewhat difficult to resist the authorities, which assert its establishment in the fundamentals of the common law;³ a circumstance which may well abate the boast, so often and so rashly made, that the common law is the perfection of human reason. Even the courts of equity in England have been so far regardful of the maxim, that they have

¹ Co. Litt. 247 *a* and *b*; Beverley's case, 4 Co. 123, 124; 2 Black. Comm. 291, 292; 1 Fonbl. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1, and note (*h*); Shelford on Lunatics, ch. 6, § 2, p. 255, 263; Newland on Contracts, ch. 1, p. 19; Sugden on Powers, ch. 7, § 1.

² See Evans's note, 2 Pothier on Oblig. App. No. 3, p. 28.

³ 3 Black. Comm. 291, 292; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1, and note (*d*); Co. Litt. 247; Beverley's case, 4 Co. 123; Yates v. Boen, 2 Str. 1104; See Shelford on Lunatics, ch. 6, § 2, p. 263; ch. 9, § 2, p. 407, &c.; Baxter v. Portsmouth, 7 Dowl. & Ryl. 618; s. c. 5 Barn. & Cressw. 170; Brown v. Joddrell, 3 Carr. & Payne, 39; Newland on Contracts, ch. 1, p. 15 to 21. The subject is a good deal discussed by Mr. Justice Blackstone in his Commentaries, who does not attempt to disguise its gross injustice. (2 Black. Com. 291, 292.) It is also fully discussed by Mr. Fonblanque, in his learned notes (1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1, and notes *a* to *k*); and by Lord Coke, in his Commentary on Littleton (Co. Litt. 247 *a* and *b*), who adheres firmly to it (as we should expect) as a maxim of the common law. See also Beverley's case (5 Co. 123, and Shelford on Lunatics, ch. 6, § 1, 2, p. 242, 255; ch. 9, § 2, p. 407, &c.). In America, this maxim has not been of universal adoption in the State courts; if, indeed, it has ever been recognized as binding in any of the courts of common law. See *Somes v. Skinner*, 16 Mass. 348; *Webster v. Woodford*, 3 Day, 90, 100; *Mitchell v. Kingman*, 5 Pick. 431; *Lang v. Whidden*, 2 N. H. 435. In modern times, the English courts of law seem to be disposed, as far as possible, to escape from the maxim. *Baxter v. Earl of Portsmouth*, 5 Barn. & Cressw. 170; s. c. 7 Dowl. & Ryl. 614; *Ball v. Mannin*, 3 Bligh (N. S.) 1. And even in England, although the party himself could not set aside his own act, yet the king, as having the general custody of idiots and lunatics, might, by his attorney general, on a bill, set aside the same acts. See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 2; Co. Litt. 247; Newland on Contracts, ch. 1, p. 15 to 21; Buller, N. Prius, 172.

hesitated to retain a bill to examine the point of lunacy;¹ although, when a party has been found a lunatic under an inquisition, they will entertain a bill, by his committee or guardian, to avoid all his acts from the time at which he has been found *non compos*.² And, formerly, they were so scrupulous in adhering to the maxim, that cases have occurred in which a lunatic was not allowed to be a party to a bill, to be relieved against an act done during his lunacy.³ But this rule is now with great propriety abandoned.⁴

§ 226. The true and only rational exposition of the maxim (which has been adopted by courts of equity) is, that the maxim is to be understood of acts done by the lunatic in prejudice of others; as to which he shall not be permitted to excuse himself from civil responsibility on pretence of lunacy; and it is not to be understood of acts done to the prejudice of himself; for this can have no foundation in reason and natural justice.⁵

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1, note (e); cites Tothill, 130. See also 1 Eq. Abridg. 278, B. 1.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1, note (e); 1 Eq. Abridg. 278, B. 2; Addison v. Dawson, 2 Vern. 678; s. c. 1 Eq. Abridg. B. 4; Newland on Contracts, ch. 1, p. 7 to 21.

³ Attorney General v. Parkhurst, 1 Ch. Cas. 112. See also Attorney General v. Woolrich, 1 Ch. Cas. 153. Some acts of a lunatic are, by the common law, deemed voidable, and some void. Where the estate passes by his own hand, as by livery of seisin, there it is voidable; where by a deed, and the conveyance does not pass by his own hand, it is void. For example, a surrender by deed of a *non compos* tenant for life will not bar a contingent remainder. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1; 1 Eq. Abridg. 278, B. 3; Thompson v. Leach, 3 Mod. 301; 1 Lord Ray. 313; 2 Salk. 427; Shower, Parl. Cas. 150; 3 Lev. 284. See Shelford on Lunatics, ch. 6, § 2, p. 555, &c.

⁴ See Ridler v. Ridler, 1 Eq. Abridg. 278, 279, B. 5; Addison v. Dawson, 2 Vern. 678; Clerk v. Clerk, 2 Vern. 412; Shelford on Lunatics, ch. 10, § 2, p. 415, &c.; Newland on Contracts, ch. 1, p. 17 to 19; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 2, and note (n).

⁵ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 2; Ridler v. Ridler, 1 Eq. Abridg. 279, B. 5; 3 Bac. Abridg. Idiots and Lunatics, C. F. In discussing the subject of idiots and lunatics, and persons *non compos mentis*, in this place, it is important to state, that it is not intended to examine the nature and history of the jurisdiction of the Court of Chancery, or rather of the chancellor personally, as the special delegate of the Crown, over idiots, lunatics, and other persons *non compos* generally. That is a subject of a widely different character from the one now before us; for here the Court of Chancery acts upon its general principles, in setting aside the contracts and acts of such persons, upon the ground of fraud, circumvention, imposition, and undue advantage taken of them. The jurisdiction of the Crown, as *parens patriæ*, to take care of idiots, lunatics, and other persons *non compos*,

§ 227. The ground, upon which courts of equity now interfere, to set aside the contracts and other acts, however solemn, of persons who are idiots, lunatics, and otherwise *non compotes mentis*, is fraud. Such persons being incapable in point of capacity to enter into any valid contract, or to do any valid act, every person dealing with them, knowing their incapacity, is deemed to perpetrate a meditated fraud upon them and their rights. And, surely, if there be a single case in which all the ingredients, proper to constitute a genuine fraud, are to be found, it must be a case where these unfortunate persons are the victims of the cunning, the avarice, and corrupt influence of those who would make an inhuman profit from their calamities. Even courts of law now lend an indulgent ear to cases of defence against contracts of this nature; and, if the fraud is made out, will declare them invalid.¹

§ 228. But courts of equity deal with the subject upon the most enlightened principles, and watch with the most jealous care every attempt to deal with persons *non compotes mentis*. Wherever, from the nature of the transaction, there is not evidence of entire good faith (*uberrimæ fidei*), or the contract or other act is not seen to be just in itself, or for the benefit of these persons, courts of equity will set it aside, or make it subservient to their just rights and interests.² Where, indeed, a contract is entered into with good faith, and is for the benefit of such persons, such as for necessaries, there courts of equity will uphold it, as well as courts of law.³ [* And such a claim is not barred by the lapse of the term of the statute of limitations, in England, since the Court of Chancery will take judicial notice, in a suit to obtain payment out of the assets of the lunatic after his death, that any action for the recov-

is given at considerable length in Jeremy Eq. Jurisd. B. 1, ch. 4, p. 210; 2 Mad. Pr. Ch. ch. 4, p. 565; 2 Fonbl. Eq. Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1, and note (a); 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 2, and note (c). See also Beverley's case, 4 Co. 124; 2 Story on Eq. Jurisp. § 1362 to 1365.

¹ Yates v. Boen, 2 Str. 1104; Baxter v. Earl of Portsmouth, 5 B. & Cressw. 170; s. c. 7 Dowl. & Ryl. 618; Faulder v. Silk, 3 Camp, 126; Brown v. Joddrell, 1 Mood. & Malk. 105; s. c. 3 Carr. & Payne, 30; Levy v. Barker, 1 Mood. & Malk. 106, and note (b).

² See Selby v. Jackson, 13 Law J. Rep. (N. S.) Chanc. 249.

³ Baxter v. Earl of Portsmouth, 5 B. & Cressw. 170; s. c. 7 Dowl. & Ryl. 614, 618; Hallett v. Oakes, 1 Cush. 296; McCrillis v. Bartlett, 8 N. H. 569; Seaver v. Phelps, 11 Pick. 304; Fitzgerald v. Reed, 9 Sm. & Mar. 94. See also *Ex parte* Hall, 7 Ves. 264; Nelson v. Duncombe, 9 Beav. 211.

ery of the claim during his life would have been restrained by the lord chancellor on petition.¹] And so if a purchase is made in good faith, without any knowledge of the incapacity, and no advantage had been taken of the party, courts of equity will not interfere to set aside the contract, if injustice will thereby be done to the other side, and the parties cannot be placed *in statu quo*, or in the state in which they were before the purchase.² [* But this rule is not applicable to a case where the question is, whether the deed of a lunatic altering the provisions of a settlement is valid.³]

§ 229. And not only may contracts and deeds of a person *non compos* be thus set aside for fraud, but other instruments and acts of the most solemn nature, even of record, such as fines levied, and recoveries suffered by such a person, may in effect be overthrown in equity, although held binding at law.⁴ For, although courts of equity will not venture to declare such fines and recoveries utterly void, and vacate them, yet they will decree a reconveyance of the estate to the party prejudiced, and hold the conusee of the fine, and the demandant in the recovery, to be a trustee for the same party.⁵

[* § 229 *a*. In a late English case, where the mortgagee brought a bill in the usual form for foreclosure, the defendant filed affidavits showing the mortgagor to have been of unsound mind at the

¹ [* *Stedman v. Hart*, Kay, 607.]

² *Neill v. Morley*, 9 Ves. 478, 482; *Sergeson v. Sealy*, 2 Atk. 412; *Carr v. Holliday*, 5 Iredell, Eq. 167; *Price v. Berrington*, 7 Eng. Law & Eq. 254; 3 Mac. & Gord. 486. See *Molton v. Camroux*, 2 Exch. 487; s. c. 4 Exch. 17.

³ [* *Elliot v. Ince*, 7 De G., M. & G. 475.]

⁴ See *Mansfield's case*, 12 Co. 123, 124. But at law the king might avoid the fine or recovery by a *scire facias*, during the lifetime of the idiot. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 2; *Beverley's case*, 4 Co. 124, 126 *b*; *Tourson's case*, 8 Co. 338; 3 Bac. Abridg. *Idiots and Lunatics*, C. and F.

⁵ See *Addison v. Dawson*, 2 Vern. 678; *Welby v. Welby*, Tothill, 164; *Wright v. Booth*, Tothill, 166; *Shelford on Lunatics*, ch. 6, § 1, p. 252; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 2, and note (*k*); *Wilkinson v. Brayfield*, 2 Vern. 307. See *Clark v. Ward*, Preced. Chan. 150; *Ferres v. Ferres*, 2 Eq. Abridg. 695; 3 Bac. Abridg. *Idiots and Lunatics*, F. What circumstances afford proofs or presumptions of insanity, are not fit topics for discussion in this place, but more properly belong to a treatise on Medical Jurisprudence. There are many reported cases in which the subject is discussed with great ability and acuteness. See *Shelford on Lunatics*, ch. 2, p. 35 to 74; *Attorney General v. Parnter*, 3 Bro. Ch. 441; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 3, note (*x*). See also *Mr. Evans's note to Pothier on Oblig. No. 3*, p. 25.

date of the deed. The Master of the Rolls held that, in order to be relieved from the mortgage, the defendants must institute some proceedings of their own, and made the usual decree of foreclosure, but directed that it should not be drawn up for six months. On appeal, their lordships held, that the defendants were entitled, without any action on their part, to have the question tried by a jury, before a decree could be made against them, and offered the plaintiff the alternative of an issue, or an action of ejectment.¹

§ 229 b. Where notes, mortgages, and deeds were procured to be executed, without any adequate consideration, by a man near eighty years of age, much enfeebled in body and mind, and by his circumstances and condition rendered incapable of protecting himself from fraud and imposition, they were held to be invalid, and set aside. But for money advanced for necessaries, and to pay off *bona fide* mortgages upon the property, for the benefit of such imbecile person, it was held the grantee making the advancements was entitled to a charge upon the estate, and to be subrogated to the rights of the creditors whose claims he had paid.²]

¹ [* *Jacobs v. Richards*, 5 De G., M. & G. 55. In this case the mortgage was dated in 1848, and in 1852 a commission of lunacy issued against the mortgagor, and he was found, upon the inquisition, to have been lunatic from 1825. The counsel for the mortgagor, in argument before the Court of Appeals, relied upon the following cases: *Thompson v. Leach*, 3 Mod. 296; *Clerk v. Clerk*, 2 Vernon, 412; *Yates v. Boen*, 2 Strange, 1104; *Attorney General v. Parnter*, 3 Bro. C. C. 441; *Snook v. Watts*, 11 Beavan, 105; *Grindley v. Davies*, *Shelford on Lunacy*, 266; *Sergeson v. Sealy*, 2 Atk. 412; *Frank v. Mainwaring*, 2 Beavan, 115; *Hall v. Warren*, 9 Vesey, 605; *Ridler v. Ridler*, 1 Eq. Ca. Ab. 279; *Molton v. Camroux*, 2 Exch. 487; *Price v. Berrington*, 3 Mac. & Gor. 486.

² *Coleman v. Frazer*, 3 Bush. 300, citing *Pearl v. McDowell*, 3 J. J. Marshall, 662. See also as to the right of one holding under a defective conveyance to charge the land with his actual outlay. *Whitaker v. Garnett*, 3 Bush, 402. Upon the general question of courts of equity interfering to set aside contracts, on the ground of inadequacy of consideration and unequal capacity in the parties and abuse of confidence, either personal or resulting from the relation of the parties, see *Highburger v. Stiffler*, 21 Md. 338; *Maddox v. Simmons*, 31 Ga. 512. And, as to the grounds on which the courts refuse to interfere in such cases, see *Fish v. Cleland*, 33 Ill. 238. And it was held in a somewhat recent case in the Court of Chancery Appeal, *Rhodes v. Bate*, Law Rep. 1 Ch. App. 252, that it is a principle of equity law that one standing in a confidential relation to others cannot retain substantial benefits, which they may have conferred upon him, unless they had competent and independent professional advice in conferring them; and in that class of cases to which this principle applies the age and capacity of the person conferring such benefits are of little importance. But it was held in *Carpenter v. Danforth*, 52 Barb. 581, that no such trust or confiden-

§ 230. Lord Coke has enumerated four different classes of persons who are deemed in law to be *non compos mentis*. The first is an idiot, or fool natural; the second is he who was of good and sound memory, and by the visitation of God has lost it; the third is a lunatic, *lunaticus qui gaudet lucidis intervallis*, and sometimes is of a good and sound memory, and sometimes *non compos mentis*; and the fourth is a *non compos mentis* by his own act, as a drunkard.¹ In respect to the last class of persons, although it is regularly true, that drunkenness doth not extenuate any act or offence committed by any person against the laws; but it rather aggravates it, and he shall gain no privilege thereby;² and although in strictness of law, the drunkard has less ground to avoid his own acts and contracts than any other *non compos mentis*;³ yet courts of equity will relieve against acts done, and contracts made by him, while under this temporary insanity, where they are procured by the fraud or imposition of the other party.⁴ For whatever may be the demerit of the drunkard himself, the other party has not the slightest ground to claim the protection of courts of equity against his own grossly immoral and fraudulent conduct.⁵

tial relation existed between the shareholders and the directors of a joint-stock company as to preclude them from dealing with each other on equal terms as to the purchase and sale of shares. But this seems somewhat questionable. And in such a case, where the director, either in the purchase or sale of the shares of the company gained an unequal advantage over the ordinary shareholder, it would be very natural to infer that such advantage might have been gained, more or less, by his position and the more intimate knowledge consequent upon it, unless the contrary was made very clearly to appear by the proof.

There is a recent case in Pennsylvania, Hetrick's Appeal, 58 Penn. St. 477, where the court said, that when a man, broken by years and standing alone and too enfeebled in mind and body to be watchful of his own interests or to penetrate the designs of others, contracts with an unsuitable or insolvent man for necessary support and assistance for life and surrenders by deed all his property to him, a chancellor should take hold of the slightest circumstance to set aside the deed. But all these allegations being denied and none of them proved except the poverty of the defendant, the contract providing that he should not convey the property during the life of the plaintiff, which he had not violated, the bill was very properly dismissed.]

¹ Beverley's case, 4 Co. 124; Co. Litt. 247 a.

² Ibid.; 4 Black. Comm. 25; 3 Bac. Abridg. *Idiots and Lunatics*, A.

³ 3 Bac. Abridg. *Idiots and Lunatics*, A.

⁴ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 3; *Johnson v. Medlicott*, cited 3 P. Will. 130, note (A); *Cooley v. Ranken*, 11 Miss. 642.

⁵ See *Cook v. Clayworth*, 18 Ves. 12; *Calloway v. Witherspoon*, 5 Iredell,

§ 231. But to set aside any act or contract on account of drunkenness, it is not sufficient, that the party is under undue excitement from liquor.¹ It must rise to that degree which may be called excessive drunkenness, where the party is utterly deprived of the use of his reason and understanding; for in such a case there can in no just sense be said to be a serious and deliberate consent on his part; and without this, no contract or other act can or ought to be binding by the law of nature.² If there be not that degree of excessive drunkenness, then courts of equity will not interfere at all, unless there has been some contrivance or management to draw the party into drink,³ or some unfair advantage taken of his intoxication, to obtain an unreasonable bargain or benefit from him.⁴ For, in general, courts of equity, as a matter of public

Eq. 128. The maxim has sometimes been laid down, *Qui peccat ebrius luat sobrius*. *Hendrick v. Hopkins*, Cary, 93. But even at law, drunkenness is a good defence against a deed executed by a party when so drunk that he does not know what he is doing. *Cole v. Robins*, Bull. N. P. 172; *Gore v. Gibson*, 13 M. & W. 623; *Barrett v. Buxton*, 2 Aikens, 167. See 2 *Shelford on Lunatics*, ch. 7, p. 276; *id.* 304.

¹ *Pittinger v. Pittinger*, 2 Green, Ch. 156. See *Crane v. Conklin*, Saxton, Ch. 346; *Belcher v. Belcher*, 10 Yerg. 521; *Jeness v. Howard*, 6 Blackf. 240; *Hutchinson v. Tindal*, 2 Green, Ch. 357.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 3; *Cook v. Clayworth*, 18 Ves. 12; *Reynolds v. Waller*, 1 Wash. 207; *Rutherford v. Ruff*, 4 Desaus. 350; *Wade v. Colvert*, 2 Rep. Comst. Ct. 27; *Peyton v. Rawlins*, 1 Hayw. 77. Sir Joseph Jekyll is said to have intimated an opinion, that the having been in drink is not any reason to relieve a man against any deed or agreement gained from him to encourage drunkenness. *Secus*, if through the management or contrivance of him who gained the deed, &c., the party from whom the deed has been gained was drawn in to drink. *Johnson v. Medlicott*, 1734, cited 3 P. Will. 130, note A. But this distinction seems wholly unsatisfactory; for in each case it is the fraud of the party who obtained the deed or agreement which constitutes the ground of declaring it invalid; and the fraud is in morals and common sense the same, whether the drunken party has been enticed into the drunkenness, or becomes the victim of the cunning of another, who takes advantage of his mental incapacity. The case of *Cook v. Clayworth* (18 Ves. 12) requires no such distinction, where the circumstances indicate fraud. In this last case, Sir William Grant said: "As to that extreme state of intoxication, that deprives a man of his reason, I apprehend that even at law it would invalidate a deed obtained from him while in that condition." See also *Cole v. Robins*, Buller, N. P. 172; *Wigglesworth v. Steers*, 1 Hen. & Munf. 70.

³ *Hotchkiss v. Fortson*, 7 Yerg. 67; *Harvey v. Peaks*, 1 Munf. 519.

⁴ *Cook v. Clayworth*, 18 Ves. 12; *Say v. Barwick*, 1 Ves. & Beames, 195; *Campbell v. Catcham*, 1 Bibb, 406; *White v. Cox*, 3 Hayw. 82; *Wigglesworth v. Steers*, 1 Hen. & Munf. 70; *Taylor v. Patrick*, 1 Bibb, 168.

policy, do not incline, on the one hand, to lend their assistance to a person who has obtained an agreement or deed from another in a state of intoxication ; and, on the other hand, they are equally unwilling to assist the intoxicated party to get rid of his agreement or deed, merely on the ground of his intoxication at the time. They will leave the parties to their ordinary remedies at law, unless there is some fraudulent contrivance or some imposition practised.¹

§ 232. It is upon this special ground that courts of equity have acted in cases where a broader principle has sometimes been supposed to have been upheld. They have, indeed, indirectly, by refusing relief, sustained agreements, which have been fairly entered into, although the party was intoxicated at the time.² And, especially, they have refused relief where the agreement was to settle a family dispute, and was in itself reasonable.³ But they have not gone the length of giving a positive sanction to such agreements, so entered into, by enforcing them against the party, or in any other manner than by refusing to interfere in his favor against them.⁴

§ 233. In regard to drunkenness, the writers upon natural and public law adopt it, as a general principle, that contracts made by persons in liquor, even though their drunkenness be voluntary, are utterly void ; because they are incapable of any deliberate consent, in like manner as persons who are insane, or *non compos mentis*. The rule is so laid down by Heineccius,⁵ and Pufendorf.⁶ It is adopted by Pothier, one of the purest of jurists, as an axiom which requires no illustration.⁷ Heineccius, in discussing the subject, has made some sensible observations. Either (says he) the drunkenness of the party entering into a contract is excessive or moderate. If moderate, and it did not quite so much obscure his understanding, as that he was ignorant with

¹ *Cook v. Clayworth*, 18 Ves. 12 ; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 22, p. 365 ; *Rich v. Sydenham*, 1 Ch. Cas. 202.

² *Cook v. Clayworth*, 18 Ves. 12. See also 5 Barn. & Cressw. 170.

³ *Cory v. Cory*, 1 Ves. 19. See *Stockley v. Stockley*, cited 18 Ves. 18, note ; *Dunnage v. White*, 1 Swanst. 137, 150.

⁴ See *Cragg v. Holme*, cited 18 Ves. 14, and note (C) at the Rolls, 1811.

⁵ Heinecc. *Elem. Jur. Natur. Lib. 1*, ch. 14, § 392 and note, *ibid*.

⁶ Pufend. *Law of Nature and Nat. B. 1*, ch. 4, § 8.

⁷ Pothier *Traité des Oblig. n. 49*. See also 2 Evans, *Pothier on Oblig. No. 3*, p. 28.

whom or for what he had contracted, the contract ought to bind him. But if his drunkenness was excessive, that could not fail to be perceived; and, therefore, the party dealing with him must have been engaged in a manifest fraud; or, at least, he ought to impute it to his own fault, that he had dealt with a person in such a situation.¹ The Scottish law seems to have adopted this distinction; for by that law persons in a state of absolute drunkenness, and consequently deprived of reason, cannot bind themselves by any contracts. But a lesser degree of drunkenness, which only darkens reason, has not the effect of annulling contracts.²

§ 234. Closely allied to the foregoing are cases, where a person, although not positively *non compos*, or insane, is yet of such great weakness of mind as to be unable to guard himself against imposition, or to resist importunity or undue influence. And it is quite immaterial from what cause such weakness arises; whether it arises from temporary illness, general mental imbecility, the natural incapacity of early infancy, the infirmity of extreme old age, or those accidental depressions which result from sudden fear, or constitutional despondency, or overwhelming calamities. For it has been well remarked, that, although there is no direct proof that a man is *non compos*, or delirious, yet, if he is a man of weak understanding, and is harassed and uneasy at the time, or if the deed is executed by him *in extremis*, or when he is a paralytic, it cannot be supposed that he had a mind adequate to the business which he was about, and he might be very easily imposed upon.³

[* § 234 a. There is a marked case of this character in a late volume of Connecticut reports,⁴ illustrating the distinction between actual and constructive fraud, in one aspect, and the necessity of the triers of fact passing upon the question of fraud. In that case, by reference to a committee, a proceeding peculiar to that State, the following facts were reported. The property conveyed was an estate, coming to the plaintiff by the decease of his sister, of the value of \$7,000. He had been grossly intemperate for a long period, and his mind was greatly enfeebled in consequence; he was

¹ Heinecc. Juris. Nat. Lib. 1, ch. 14, § 392, note.

² Erskine, Inst. B. 1, tit. 1, § 15, p. 485; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 239; 1 Stair, Inst. B. 1, tit. 10, § 13; 2 Stair, Inst. B. 4, tit. 20, § 49.

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 3.

⁴ *Lavette v. Sage*, 29 Conn. 577.

unacquainted with business, except of the simplest kind ; and he did not know of his sister's death until informed of it by the defendant, who had sought him out for the purpose of obtaining the conveyance. He was wholly ignorant of the character and value of the estate left by his sister ; and the defendant, who was aware of that fact, did not inform him fully, or correctly, upon that point, but suppressed certain important facts, and excited his fears by suggesting that he might lose the whole by the contesting of a certain will under which his sister received it, when he had no reason to suppose the will would be contested ; and by these means the defendant obtained a conveyance of the estate for \$1,000, only \$300 of which was paid in money, and the rest in the defendant's notes, who was a bankrupt, but had afterwards offered to pay the notes. The committee found no actual fraud, and none of any kind, *unless the law would infer it from the facts found*. It was held the conveyance was properly set aside upon these facts. It is further said that it is not important, in such a case, that the court should, in terms, find fraud. The passing a decree is a sufficient application of the law to the facts. If the fraud depend upon motives and intent, as where the act is equivocal, and if done with one intent, innocent, but if done with another, fraudulent ; in such cases the intent must be proved and found.¹]

§ 235. It has, indeed, been said by a learned judge, that if a weak man give a bond, and there be no fraud or breach of trust in the obtaining of it, equity will not set aside the bond only for the weakness of the obligor, if he be *compos mentis* ; neither will a court of equity measure the size of people's understandings or capacities, there being no such thing as an equitable incapacity, where there is a legal capacity.² But whatever weight there may be in this remark, in a general sense, it is obvious that weakness of understanding must constitute a most material ingredient in

¹ It seems to us very wonderful that there could have been any more than one opinion in regard to this case. Instead of being, as intimated in the head-note, and the opinion of the court, and especially the intimation of Chief Justice STORRS, during the argument, a case of *constructive* fraud, as distinguished from actual fraud, it seems to us a most flagrant case of actual fraud, admitting of no question or ground of argument to the contrary ; combining, in most unequivocal terms, both the essential elements of actual fraud, the *suppressio veri* and the *suggestio falsi*.

² Sir Joseph Jekyll, in *Osmond v. Fitzroy*, 3 P. Will. 129, 130. See also *Ex parte Allen*, 15 Mass. 58.

examining whether a bond or other contract has been obtained by fraud, or imposition, or undue influence; for, although a contract, made by a man of sound mind and fair understanding, may not be set aside, merely from its being a rash, improvident, or hard bargain, yet, if the same contract be made with a person of weak understanding, there does arise a natural inference, that it was obtained by fraud, or circumvention, or undue influence.¹

§ 236. It has been asserted by another eminent judge, that it is not sufficient to set aside an agreement in a court of equity, to suggest weakness and indiscretion in one of the parties, who has engaged in it; for, supposing it to be in fact a very hard and unconscionable bargain, if a person will enter into it with his eyes open, equity will not relieve him upon this footing only, unless he can show fraud in the party contracting with him, or some undue means, made use of to draw him into such an agreement.² But this language, if maintainable at all, requires many qualifications; for, if a person is of a feeble understanding, and the bargain is unconscionable, what better proof can one wish of its being obtained by fraud, or imposition, or undue influence, or by the power of the strong over the weak?³

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1. ch. 2, § 3, note (r); *Blackford v. Christian*, 1 Knapp, 73, 77; *Clarkson v. Hanway*, 2 P. Will. 203; *Gartside v. Isherwood*, 1 Bro. Ch. Appendix, 559, 560, 561. Lord Thurlow is said to have remarked, in *Griffin v. De Veulle* (3 Wooddes. Lect. App. 16), that he admitted, "That this court would not set aside the voluntary deed of a weak man, who is not absolutely *non compos*, nor any deed of improvidence or profuseness, for these reasons merely, where no fraud appears, as was laid down by Sir Joseph Jekyll in *Osmond v. Fitzroy*, 3 P. Will. 130. But he said, that Sir Joseph Jekyll might have been pleased to add, that from these ingredients there might be made out and evidenced a collection of facts, that there was fraud and misrepresentation used. The case of *Osmond v. Fitzroy* cannot be supported but upon the mixed ground of Lord Southampton's extreme weakness of understanding, as well as the situation of *Osmond*." And in Mr. Cox's note to 3 P. Will. 131, he is represented to have stated, "That in almost every case upon this subject, a principal ingredient was a degree of weakness, short of a legal incapacity." Mr. Maddock seems to think that *Osmond v. Fitzroy* went principally upon the ground of the relation between the parties (servant and master); and he holds the doctrine of Sir Joseph Jekyll the most conformable to the authorities. 1 *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 224, 225. See *Stock on Lunacy*.

² Lord Hardwicke, in *Willis v. Jernegan*, 2 Atk. 251.

³ See *Malin v. Malin*, 2 Johns. Ch. 238; *Shelford on Lunatics*, ch. 6, § 3, p. 258, 267, 268, 272; *White v. Small*, 2 Ch. Cas. 103; *Bridgman v. Green*, 2 Ves. 627; *Clarkson v. Hanway*, 2 P. Will. 203; *Bennett v. Vade*, 2 Atk. 325, 529;

§ 237. The language of another eminent judge, in a very recent case, is far more satisfactory and comprehensive, and applies a mode of reasoning to the subject compatible at once with the dictates of common sense and legal exactness and propriety. "The law" (said Lord Wynford) "will not assist a man, who is capable of taking care of his own interest, except in cases where he has been imposed upon by deceit, against which ordinary prudence could not protect him. If a person of ordinary understanding, on whom no fraud has been practised, makes an imprudent bargain, no court of justice can release him from it.¹ Inadequacy of consideration is not a substantial ground for setting aside a conveyance of property. Indeed, from the fluctuation of prices, owing principally to the gambling spirit of speculation that now unhappily prevails, it would be difficult to determine what is an adequate price for any thing sold. At the time of the sale the buyer properly calculates on a rise in the value of the article bought, of which he would have the advantage. He must not, therefore, complain, if his speculations are disappointed, and he becomes a loser, instead of a gainer, by his bargain. But those who, from imbecility of mind, are incapable of taking care of themselves, are under the special protection of the law. The strongest mind cannot always contend with deceit and falsehood. A bargain, therefore, into which a weak one is drawn, under the influence of

Nantes v. Corrock, 9 Ves. 181, 182; *Willan v. Willan*, 16 Ves. 72; *Blackford v. Christian*, 1 Knapp, 73 to 87; *Griffith v. Robbins*, 3 Mad. 191; *Ball v. Mannin*, 3 Bligh, 1 (new series); s. c. 1 Dow, 392 (new series); 1 Fonbl. Eq. 1, ch. 2, § 3, note (r); *Fillmer v. Gott*, 7 Bro. Par. 70; *Dodds v. Wilson*, 1 Rep. Const. Ct. of S. Car. 448; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 22, p. 362; *Gartside v. Isherwood*, 1 Bro. Ch. 558, 560, 561. In truth, there was not the slightest proof of any weakness of understanding of the party in the case of *Willis v. Jernegan*, 2 Atk. 251; but merely of a sanguine and ardent temper and imagination, speculating with rashness upon the hope of imaginary profits. And, indeed, it appears that the speculation might have been profitable, but for the party's insisting upon an exorbitant premium for the lottery-tickets, until the market had fallen. The weakness alluded to in this case by Lord Hardwicke, was probably not so much incapacity of mind as credulity or want of judgment; for he expressly negatives any fraud or imposition. See Lord Eldon's remarks in *Huguenin v. Basley*, 14 Ves. 290; *Fox v. Macreth*, 2 Bro. Ch. 420; 2 Hovend. Suppt. 113, note to 9 Ves. 182; *Shelf. on Lunatics*, Introd. § 2, p. 36, &c.; id. ch. 6, § 3, p. 265, 267, 268, 272. See also *Lewis v. Pead*, 1 Ves. Jr. 19; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 3, and note (r); *Harvey v. Mount*, 8 Beavan, 439.

¹ See *Warner v. Daniels*, 1 Wood. & Min. 103.

either of these, ought not to be held valid, for the law requires that good faith should be observed in all transactions between man and man." And, addressing himself to the case before him, he added, "If this conveyance could be impeached on the ground of the imbecility of F., only, a sufficient case has not been made out to render it invalid; for the imbecility must be such as would justify a jury, under a commission of lunacy, in putting his property and person under the protection of the chancellor. But a degree of weakness of intellect, far below that which would justify such a proceeding, coupled with other circumstances, to show that the weakness, such as it was, had been taken advantage of, will be sufficient to set aside any important deed."¹

§ 238. The doctrine, therefore, may be laid down as generally true, "that the acts and contracts of persons who are of weak understandings,² and who are thereby liable to imposition, will be held void in courts of equity, if the nature of the act or contract justify the conclusion that the party has not exercised a deliberate judgment, but that he has been imposed upon, circumvented, or overcome by cunning or artifice, or undue influence."³ [But the simple fact that the intellectual capacity of one party to a contract is below that of the average of mankind, does not alone furnish sufficient ground for setting aside the contract.⁴] The rule of the common law seems to have gone further in cases of wills (for, it is said, that, perhaps, it can hardly be extended to deeds without circumstances of fraud or imposition); since the common law requires that a person, to dispose of his property by will, should be of sound and disposing memory,⁵ which imports that the testa-

¹ Blackford v. Christian, 1 Knapp, 77. See Gartside v. Isherwood, 1 Bro. Ch. App. 560, 561.

² See Hunt v. Moore, 2 Barr, 105.

³ See Gartside v. Isherwood, 1 Bro. Ch. App. 560, 561; Rippey v. Grant, 4 Ired. Eq. 443; Tracy v. Sacket, 1 Ohio St. 58; Whiteburn v. Hines, 1 Munf. 557; Buffalow v. Buffalow, 2 Dev. & Batt. Eq. 241; Dunn v. Chambers, 4 Barbour, 376. In the treatise on Equity (1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 3), it is laid down that the protection of courts of equity "is not to be extended to every person of a weak understanding, unless there be some fraud or surprise; for courts of equity would have enough to do if they were to examine into the wisdom and prudence of men in disposing of their estates. Let a man be wise, therefore, or unwise, if he be legally *compos mentis*, he is a disposer of his property, and his will stands instead of a reason. s. p. Bath and Montague's case, 3 Ch. Cas. 107.

[⁴ Mann v. Betterly, 21 Verm. 326.

⁵ See the late case of Waring v. Waring, 6 Moore, p. c. 341, where the subject is ably examined.]

cumstances, also, of extreme necessity and distress of the party, although not accompanied by any direct restraint or duress, may, in like manner, so entirely overcome his free agency as to justify the court in setting aside a contract made by him, on account of some oppression, or fraudulent advantage, or imposition, attendant upon it.¹

ton v. Hinton, 2 Ves. 634, 635; Falkner v. O'Brien, 2 B. & Beatt. 214; Griffith v. Spratley, 1 Cox, 333; Underhill v. Horwood, 10 Ves. 219; Attorney General v. Sothon, 2 Vern. 497.

¹ See Gould v. Okeden, 3 Bro. Parl. 560; Bosanquet v. Dashwood, Cas. temp. Talbot, 37; Proof v. Hines, Cas. temp. Talb. 111; Hawes v. Wyatt, 3 Bro. Ch. 156; Pickett v. Loggon, 14 Ves. 215; Beasley v. Magrath, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 31, 35; Carpenter v. Elliot, cited 2 Ves. Jr. 494; Farmer v. Farmer, 1 House of Lords Cases, 724; Wood v. Abrey, 3 Mad. 417; Ramsbottom v. Parker, 6 Mad. 6; Fitzgerald v. Rainsford, 1 B. & Beatt. 37, note (*d*); Underhill v. Horwood, 10 Ves. 219; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 9, note (*e*); Crowe v. Ballard, 1 Ves. Jr. 215, 220; Huguenin v. Baseley, 14 Ves. 273; Newland on Contracts, ch. 22, p. 362, &c.; *id.* p. 365, &c. The doctrine of the common law, upon the subject of avoiding contracts upon the ground of mental weakness, or force, or undue influence, does not seem, in any essential manner, to differ from that adopted in the Roman law, or in the law of modern continental Europe. Thus we find in the Roman law, the contracts may be avoided, not only for incapacity, but for mental imbecility, the use of force, or the want of liberty in regard to the party contracting. Ait Prætor, Quod metus causâ gestum erit, ratum non habebit. Dig. Lib. 4, tit. 2, l. 1. But then the force, or fear, must be of such a nature as may well overcome a firm man. Metum accipiendum, Labeo dicit, non quemlibet timorem, sed majoris malitatis. Dig. Lib. 4, tit. 2, l. 5. The party must be intimidated by the apprehension of some serious evil of a present and pressing nature. Metum non vani hominis sed qui merito et in hominem constantissimum cadat; Dig. Lib. 4, tit. 2, l. 6. He must act, Metu majoris malitatis; and feel, that it is immediate; Metum presentum accipere debemus, non suspicionem inferendi ejus. See Dig. Lib. 4, tit. 2, l. 9; 1 Domat, Civil Law, B. 1, tit. 18, § 2, art. 1 to 10. Pothier gives his assent to this general doctrine; but he deems the civil law too rigid in requiring the menace or force to be such as might intimidate a constant or firm man; and very properly thinks, that regard should be had to the age, sex, and condition of the parties. Pothier on Oblig. n. 25. Mr. Evans thinks that any contract produced by the actual intimidation of another, ought to be held void, whether it were the result of personal infirmity merely, or of such circumstances as might ordinarily produce the like effect upon others. 1 Evans, Pothier on Oblig. n. 25, note (*a*), p. 18. The Scottish law seems to have followed out the line of reasoning of the Roman law with a scrupulous deference and closeness. Ersk. Inst. B. 4, tit. 1, § 26. The Scottish law also puts the case of imposition from weakness upon a clear ground. "Let one be ever so subject to imposition, yet, if he has understanding enough to save himself from a sentence of idiocy, the law makes him capable of managing his own affairs, and consequently his deeds, however hurtful they may be to himself, must

[* § 239 *a*. So where one had conceived the idea that a deposed clergyman of the Church of England, who had subsequently become the head of the Agapemone, or Free Love, was in reality the Tabernacle of the Most High, and the abode of His Spirit, his own spirit having become extinct, although entirely sane upon every other point, and under such delusion conveyed all her estate, consisting of a considerable sum invested in the public stocks, and subsequently died at such Agapemone, it was held, on a bill filed by her relatives and next of kin, that the defendant obtained such stocks by undue influence, and he was decreed to convey them to the heirs, and pay all the costs of the suit, notwithstanding he declared in his answer, that the conveyance to him was made wholly without solicitation or knowledge on his part.¹]

§ 240. The acts and contracts of infants, that is, of all persons under twenty-one years of age (who are by the common law deemed infants), are *à fortiori*, treated as falling within the like predicament. For infants are by law generally treated as having no capacity to bind themselves, from the want of sufficient reason and discernment of understanding; and, therefore, their grants and those of lunatics are, in many respects, treated as parallel both in law and reason.² There are, indeed, certain excepted cases, in which infants are permitted by law to bind themselves by their acts and contracts. But these are all of a special nature; as, for instance, infants may bind themselves by a contract for necessaries, suitable to their degree and quality;³ or by a contract of hiring and services for wages;⁴ or by some act which the law

be effectual, unless evidence be brought, that they have been drawn, or extorted from him by unfair practices. Yet where lesion (injury) in the deed and facility in the grantor concur, the most slender circumstances of fraud or circumvention are sufficient to set it aside." Ersk. Inst. B. 4. tit. 1, § 27. Mr. Bell has also stated the same principle in the Scottish law with great clearness. There may be in one of perfect age a degree of weakness, puerility, or prodigality, which, although not such as to justify a verdict of insanity, and place him under guardianship, as insane, may yet demand some protection for him against unequal or gratuitous alienation. 1 Bell, Comm. 139. See *Harvey v. Mount*, 8 Beavan, 439.

¹ [* *Nottidge v. Prince*, 6 Jur. N. S. 1066; S. C. 2 Giff. 246. See also *Stewart v. Hubbard*, 3 Jones, Eq. 186; *Graham v. Little*, id. 152; *Davis v. McNalley*, 5 Sneed, 583.]

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 4.

³ *Zouch v. Parsons*, 3 Burr. 1801; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 4, and notes (y) and (a); Co. Litt. 172 a.

⁴ *Wood v. Fenwick*, 10 Mees. & Welsb. 195. [In America, the doctrine is that contracts to work and labor for wages made by an infant are voidable like

requires them to do.¹ And, generally, infants are favored by the law, as well as by equity, in all things which are for their benefit, and are saved from being prejudiced by any thing to their disadvantage.² But this rule is designed as a shield for their own protection; it is not allowed to operate as a fraud or injustice to others; at least not where a court of equity has authority to reach it in cases of meditated fraud.³

§ 241. In regard to the acts of infants, some are voidable and some are void; and so, also, in regard to their contracts, some are voidable and some are void. Where they are utterly void, they are from the beginning mere nullities, and incapable of any operation. But where they are voidable, it is in the election of the infant to avoid them, or not, which he may do, when he arrives at full age. In this respect, he is by law differently placed from idiots and lunatics; for the latter, as we have seen, are not, or at least may not, at law, be allowed to stultify themselves. But an infant may, at his coming of age, avoid or confirm any voidable act or contract at his pleasure. In general, where a contract may be for the benefit or to the prejudice of an infant, he may avoid it as well at law as in equity. Where it can never be for his benefit, it is utterly void.⁴ And in respect to the acts of infants of a more solemn nature, such as deeds, gifts, and grants, this distinction has been insisted on, that such as do take effect by delivery of his hand are voidable; but such as do not so take effect are void.⁵

§ 242. But, independently of these general grounds, it is clear, that contracts made and acts done by infants in favor of persons knowing their imbecility and want of discretion, and intending to take advantage of them, ought upon general principles, to be held

any other of his contracts. See *Nickerson v. Easton*, 12 Pick. 112; *Vent v. Osgood*, 19 Pick. 572; *Francis v. Felmet*, 4 Dev. & Batt. 498; *Peters v. Lord*, 18 Conn. 337; *Bingham on Infancy* (Bennett's edit.), p. 90, and note 3. And see *Regina v. Lord*, 12 Q. B. Rep. 757.]

¹ *People v. Moores*, 4 Denio, 518; *McCall v. Parker*, 13 Met. 372.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 4, and notes (y) and (a).

³ See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 4, note (z); *Zouch v. Parsons*, 3 Burr. 1802; 1 American Leading Cases, tit. Infancy.

⁴ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 4, notes (y) (z) (b); *Zouch v. Parsons*, 3 Burr. 1801, 1807; 1 American Leading Cases, tit. Infancy. [* See *Farley v. Woodburn*, 2 Stock. Ch. 96.]

⁵ *Zouch v. Parsons*, 3 Burr. 1794; *Perkins*, § 12. See 8 American Jurist, 327 to 330.

void, and set aside, on account of fraud, circumvention, imposition, or undue influence. And it is upon this ground of an inability to give a deliberate and binding consent, that the nullity of such acts and contracts is constantly put by publicists and civilians.¹ *Infans non multum a furioso distat.*

§ 243. In regard to *femes covert*, the case is still stronger; for, generally speaking, at law they have no capacity to do any acts, or to enter into any contracts; and such acts and contracts are treated as mere nullities. And, in this respect, equity generally follows the law.² This disability of married women proceeds, it is said, upon the consideration, that, if they were allowed to bind themselves, the law having vested their property in their husbands, they would be liable on their engagements, without the means of answering them. And if they were allowed to bind their husbands, they might, by the abuse of such a power, involve their husbands and families in ruin.³ But perhaps the more exact statement would be, that it is a fundamental policy of the common law, to allow no diversity of interests between husband and wife; and for this purpose it is necessary to take from the wife all power to act for herself without his consent; and to disable her, even with his consent (for her own protection against his influence), from becoming personally bound by any act or contract whatsoever, done *in pais*.⁴ Courts of equity have, indeed, broken in upon this doctrine; and have, in many respects, treated the wife as capable of disposing of her own separate property, and of doing other acts, as if she were a *feme sole*.⁵ In cases of this sort, the same principles will apply to the acts and contracts of a *feme covert*, as would apply to her as a *feme sole*, unless the circumstances give rise to the presumption of fraud, imposition, unconscionable advantage, or undue influence.⁶

[* § 243 a. In a late English case,⁷ the Court of Common Pleas

¹ See *ante*, § 222, 223; Ayliffe, Pand. B. 2, tit. 38, p. 216, 217.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 6.

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 6, note (h).

⁴ See Comyns, Dig. *Baron and Feme*, D. 1, E. 1 to 3, H. N. O. P. Q; *id.* Chancery, 2 M. 1 to 16.

⁵ See on this subject the learned notes of Mr. Fonblanque in 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 6, notes (h) to (s); Clancy on Rights, &c., of Husband and Wife; and Roper on Husband and Wife; Com. Dig. Chancery, 2 M. 1 to 16.

⁶ See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 8; *Dalbiac v. Dalbiac*, 16 Ves. 115.

⁷ [* *Wright v. Leonard*, 5 Law T. N. s. 110; s. c. 11 C. B. N. s. 258; s. c. 8 Jur. N. s. 415.

decided, two of the judges against the opinion of Chief-Justice Erle, that an action at law will lie against husband and wife, for the fraudulent representation by the wife that forged bills were the genuine signatures of the husband, and thereby obtaining a discount of the bills. And in another case,¹ the Court of Exchequer were equally divided in opinion, upon a case of fraud committed through the innocent instrumentality of an agent, ignorant of the facts, and where the principal gave no directions, and did not in any way participate in the commission of the fraud committed for his benefit, and the avails of which came to his use, through the action of the innocent agent. If such a case was to be determined in a court of morals, or of honor, there would seem to be but slight ground for difference of opinion in regard to the responsibility of the principal. We have discussed the question in all its bearings in a case in Vermont.²]

§ 244. Of a kindred nature to the cases already considered, are cases of bargains of such an unconscionable nature, and of such gross inequality, as naturally lead to the presumption of fraud, imposition, or undue influence. This is the sort of fraud to which Lord Hardwicke alluded, in the passage already cited,³ when he said, that they were such bargains that no man in his senses and not under delusion would make, on the one hand, and as no honest and fair man would accept, on the other, being inequitable and unconscientious bargains.⁴ Mere inadequacy of price, or any other inequality in the bargain, is not, however, to be understood as constituting, *per se*, a ground to avoid a bargain in equity.⁵ For

¹ *Udell v. Atherton*, 7 Jur. N. S. 777.

² *Fitzsimmons v. Joslin*, 21 Vt. 129.]

³ *Ante*, § 188; *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 132, 133, 134; *Roosevelt v. Fulton*, 2 Cowen, 129; *McDonald v. Neilson*, 2 Cowen, 139.

⁴ *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 155; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 9, note (e); *Harvey v. Mount*, 8 Beavan, 439.

⁵ *Griffith v. Spratley*, 1 Cox, 383; *Copis v. Middleton*, 2 Mad. 409; *Collier v. Brown*, 1 Cox, 428; *Low v. Barchard*, 8 Ves. 133; *Western v. Russel*, 3 Ves. & Beam. 180; *Naylor v. Winch*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 565; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 9, note (d); *Osgood v. Franklin*, 2 Johns. Ch. 1; *Borell v. Dann*, 2 Hare, 440, 450. In this case, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Wigram said: "Now with respect to the adequacy of the consideration alone, considered apart from the alleged improvidence in the manner of selling, I certainly understand the rule of the court to be that, even in ordinary cases, and *à fortiori* in cases of sales by public auction, mere inadequacy of consideration is not a ground even for refusing a decree for specific performance of an unexecuted contract (*White v. Damon, ex parte Latham*), and still less can it be a ground for rescinding an executed

courts of equity, as well as courts of law, act upon the ground that every person who is not, from his peculiar condition or circumstances, under disability, is entitled to dispose of his property in such manner and upon such terms as he chooses; and whether his bargains are wise and discreet, or profitable or unprofitable, or otherwise, are considerations, not for courts of justice, but for the party himself to deliberate upon.

§ 245. Inadequacy of consideration is not, then, of itself, a distinct principle of relief in equity. The common law knows no such principle. The consideration, be it more or less, supports the contract. Common sense knows no such principle. The value of a thing is what it will produce; and it admits of no precise standard. It must be in its nature fluctuating, and will depend upon ten thousand different circumstances. One man, in the disposal of his property, may sell it for less than another would. He may sell it under a pressure of circumstances, which may induce him to part with it at a particular time. If courts of equity were to unravel all these transactions, they would throw every thing into confusion, and set afloat the contracts of mankind.¹ Such a consequence would, of itself; be sufficient to show the inconvenience and impracticability, if not the injustice, of adopting the doctrine that mere inadequacy of consideration should form a distinct ground for relief.

[* § 245 a. This subject is considerably discussed in a late case, before the House of Lords,² where it is decided, that the fact that

contract. The only exception which I believe can be stated, is, where the inadequacy of consideration is so gross, as of itself to prove fraud or imposition on the part of the purchaser. Fraud in the purchaser is of the essence of the objection to the contract in such a case. The case must, however, be strong indeed, in which a court of justice shall say, that a purchaser at a public auction, between whom and the vendors there has been no previous communication affecting the fairness of the sale, is chargeable with fraud or imposition, only because his bidding did not greatly exceed the amount of the vendor's reserved bidding. I am perfectly satisfied that the plaintiff's case cannot be sustained upon the ground of mere inadequacy. Another principle must be introduced. It must be made out that the assignees were guilty of a breach of trust in fixing so low a reserved bidding as £900; and (as I have already observed) that the purchaser was bound to have ascertained that a breach of trust had not been committed in that respect before he accepted the conveyance."

¹ Per Lord Ch. Baron Eyre, in *Griffith v. Spratley*, 1 Cox, 383; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 213, 214; *Warner v. Daniels*, 1 Wood. & Min. 110.

² *Harrison v. Guest*, 8 Ho. Lds. Cas. 481.

the deed incorrectly recites the consideration of the contract on which the conveyance was made, will not warrant a suit in equity to set aside the contract, but only to reform the conveyance. And where no fiduciary relation exists between the parties dealing for the sale and purchase of an estate, mere inadequacy of consideration, or irregularity in the statement of it in the conveyance, is not sufficient to impeach the contract, so as to induce a court of equity to set it aside.]

§ 246. Still, however, there may be such an unconscionableness or inadequacy in a bargain,¹ as to demonstrate some gross imposition or some undue influence;² and in such cases courts of equity ought to interfere, upon the satisfactory ground of fraud.³ But then such unconscionableness or such inadequacy should be made out, as would (to use an expressive phrase) shock the conscience, and amount in itself to conclusive and decisive evidence of fraud.⁴ And where there are other ingredients in the case, of a suspicious nature, or peculiar relations between the parties, gross inadequacy of price must necessarily furnish the most vehement presumption of fraud.⁵

§ 247. The difficulty of adopting any other rule; which would not, in the common intercourse and business of human life, be found productive of serious inconvenience and endless litigation, is conceded by civilians and publicists; and, for the most part, they seem silently to abandon cases of inadequacy in bargains

¹ See *Hamet v. Dundass*, 4 Barr, 178.

² See *Barnett v. Spratt*, 4 Iredell, Eq. 171.

³ *Ibid.*; *Gartside v. Isherwood*, 1 Bro. Ch. App. 558, 560, 561. [In *Erwin v. Parham*, 12 How. U. S. 197, it was held that a purchase of a debt of \$260,000, for \$600, at a sheriff's sale, was not necessarily fraudulent and void, for inadequacy of price.]

⁴ *Coles v. Trecothick*, 9 Ves. 246; *Underhill v. Harwood*, 10 Ves. 219; *Copis v. Middleton*, 2 Mad. 409; *Stillwell v. Wilkinson*, Jacob, 280; *Peacock v. Evans*, 16 Ves. 512; *Gwynne v. Heaton*, 1 Bro. Ch. 9; *Osgood v. Franklin*, 2 Johns. Ch. 1, 23; s. c. 14 Johns. 527. [* See *Butler v. Haskell*, 4 Desaus. 651; *Wright v. Wilson*, 2 Yerger, 294; *Deaderiek v. Watkins*, 8 Humph. 520. In *Howard v. Edgell*, 17 Vt. 9, the general question of presumptive fraud resulting from inadequacy of price, connected with other circumstances, is extensively discussed both by the court and counsel.]

⁵ *Ibid.*; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 9, note (e); *id.* § 10, and notes (g) and (h); *id.* § 11; *id.* ch. 4, § 26; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 212, 213, 214; *Wormack v. Rogers*, 9 Geo. 60; *How v. Weldon*, 2 Ves. 516, 518; Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 M. 1; *Huguenin v. Baseley*, 14 Ves. 273.

where there is no fraud, to the forum of conscience, and morals, and religion. Thus, Domat, after remarking that the law of nature obliges us not to take advantage of the necessities of the seller, to buy at too low a price, adds: "But because of the difficulties in fixing the just price of things, and of the inconveniences, which would be too many and too great, if all sales were annulled, in which the things were not sold at their just value, the laws connive at the injustice of buyers, except in the sale of lands, where the price given for them is less than half of their value."¹ So that, in the civil law, sales of personal property are usually without redress; and even sales of immovable property are in the same predicament, unless the inadequacy of price amounts to one-half the value: a rule purely artificial, and which must leave behind it many cases of gross hardship and unconscionable advantage. The civil law, therefore, in fixing a moiety, and confining it to immovable property, admits, in the most clear manner, the impracticability of providing for all cases of this nature. "Rem majoris pretii (says the Code) si tu, vel pater tuus minoris distraxerit; humanum est, ut vel pretium te restituente emptoribus, fundum venundatum recipias, auctoritate judicis intercedente; vel si emptor elegerit, quod deest justo pretio, recipias;"² thus laying down the broadest rule of equity and morals, adapted to all cases. But the law-giver, struck with the unlimited nature of the proposition, immediately adds, in the same law, that the party shall not be deemed to have sold at an undervalue, unless it amounts to one-half. "Minus autem pretium esse videtur, si nec dimidia pars veri pretii soluta sit;"³ a logic not very clear or indisputable.⁴ And yet the civil law was explicit enough in denouncing fraudulent bargains. "Si pater tuus per vim coactus domum vendidit; ratum non habebitur,

¹ 1 Domat, Civil Law, B. 1, tit. 2, § 3, art. 1. See also Heineccius, Elem. I. N. et G. § 352; id. § 340.

² Cod. Lib. 4, tit. 44, l. 2; id. l. 9; Heinecc. Elem. J. N. and N. § 340, 352; *post*, § 248.

³ Cod. Lib. 4, tit. 44, l. 2; id. l. 9; 1 Domat, Civil Law, B. 1, tit. 2, § 9; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 10, note (*f*).

⁴ In another place the civil law, in relation to sales, seems plainly to wink out of sight the immorality of inadequate bargains. Quemadmodum in emendo et vendendo naturaliter concessum est, quod pluris sit, minoris emere, quod minoris sit, pluris vendere. Et ita invicem se circumscribere, ita in locationibus quoque et conditionibus juris est. Dig. Lib. 19, tit. 2, l. 22, § 3; 1 Domat, Civil Law, B. 1 tit. 18, p. 247.

quod non bonâ fide gestum est. Malæ fidei emptio irrita est.¹ Ad rescindendam venditionem, et malæ fidei probationem, hoc solum non sufficit, quod, magno pretio fundum comparatum, minoris distractum esse commemoras.”² So that we see, in this last passage, the very elements of the doctrine of equity on this subject.

§ 248. Pothier, too, of whom it has been remarked, that he is generally swayed by the purest morality, says, “Equity ought to preside in all agreements. Hence it follows, that, in contracts of mutual interest, where one of the contracting parties gives or does something, for the purpose of receiving something else, as a price and compensation for it, an injury suffered by one of the contracting parties, even when the other has not had recourse to any artifice to deceive him, is alone sufficient to render such contracts vicious. For, as equity, in matters of commerce, consists in equality, when that equity is violated, as when one of the parties gives more than he receives, the contract is vicious for want of the equity which ought to preside in it.” He immediately adds, “Although any injury whatever renders contracts inequitable, and consequently vicious, and the principle of moral duty (*le for interieur*) induces the obligation of supplying the just price; yet persons of full age are not allowed in point of law to object to their agreements as being injurious, unless the injury be excessive; a rule wisely established for the security and liberty of commerce, which requires that a person shall not be easily permitted to defeat his agreements; otherwise we should not venture upon making any contract, for fear that the other party, imagining himself to be injured by the terms of it, would oblige us to follow it by a lawsuit. That injury is commonly deemed excessive, which amounts to more than a moiety of the just price. And the person who has suffered such an injury may, within ten years, obtain letters of rescission for annulling the contract.”³

§ 249. After such concessions, we may well rest satisfied with the practical convenience of the rule of the common law, which does not make the inequality of the bargain depend solely upon the price, but upon the other attendant circumstances, which

¹ Cod. Lib. 4, tit. 44, l. 1, 4, 8.

² Cod. Lib. 4, tit. 44, l. 4; id. l. 8, 10. See 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 18, Vices of Covenants, p. 247.

³ Pothier on Oblig. n. 33, 34, by Evans; *ante*, § 347.

demonstrate imposition, or some undue influence.¹ The Scottish law has adopted the same practical doctrine.²

§ 250. This part of the subject may be concluded by the remark that courts of equity will not relieve in all cases, even of very gross inadequacy, attended with circumstances which might otherwise induce them to act, if the parties cannot be placed *in statu quo*; as, for instance, in cases of marriage settlements; for the court cannot unmarry the parties.³

§ 251. Cases of surprise, and sudden action without due deliberation, may properly be referred to the same head of fraud or imposition.⁴ An undue advantage is taken of the party under

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 10.

² Erskine, Inst. B. 4, tit. 1, § 27; *ante*, § 247; note (2), p. 262.

³ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 215; *North v. Ansall*, 2 P. Will. 619.

⁴ See *ante*, § 120, note (1); *How v. Weldon*, 2 Ves. 516. Mr. Baron Powel, in the *Earl of Bath and Montague's case* (3 Ch. Cas. 56), used the following language: "It is said that this is a deed that was obtained by surprise and circumvention. Now, I perceive this word *surprise* is of a very large and general extent. They say, that if the deed be not read to or by the party, that is a surprise; nay, the mistake of a counsel that draws the deed, either in his recitals or other things, that is a surprise of a counsel, and the surprise of counsel must be interpreted the surprise of the client, &c. If these things be sufficient to let in a court of equity, to set aside deeds found by verdict to be good in law, then no man's property can be safe. I hardly know any surprise, that should be sufficient to set aside a deed after a verdict, unless it be mixed up with fraud, and that expressly proved." Lord Chief Justice Treby, in the same case (p. 74), said: "As to the first point of surprise, &c., I confess I am still at a loss for the very notion of surprise; for I take it to be either falsehood or forgery, that is, though I take it they would not use the word, in this case, fraud, if that be not the meaning of it, to be something done unawares, nor with all the precaution and deliberation, as possibly a deed may be done. Here was a case cited not long ago, &c., out of the civil law, about surprise, &c. A man was informed by his kinsman that his son was dead, and so got him to settle his estate upon him. This is called in the civil law, *surreptio*, &c. Now the civilians define that thus: *Surreptio est cum per falsam rei narrationem, aliquid extorquetur*, when a man will, by false suggestion, prevail upon another to do that which otherwise he would not have done. And I make no doubt that equity ought to set aside that, but then this is probably called a fraud." See Lord Holt's opinion in the same case (p. 103). The lord keeper (Lord Somers), in the same case said (p. 114): "Now, for this word *surprise*, it is a word of a general signification, so general and so uncertain, that it is impossible to fix it. A man is surprised in every rash and indiscreet action, or whatsoever is not done with so much judgment as it ought to be. But I suppose the gentlemen who use that word in this case, mean such surprise as is attended and accompanied with fraud and circumvention. Such a surprise may, indeed, be a good ground to set aside a deed so obtained in equity, and hath

circumstances which mislead, confuse, or disturb the just result of his judgment, and thus expose him to be the victim of the artful, the importunate, and the cunning. It has been very justly remarked, by an eminent writer, that it is not every surprise which will avoid a deed duly made. Nor is it fitting, for it would occasion great uncertainty, and it would be impossible to fix what is meant by surprise; for a man may be said to be surprised in every action which is not done with so much discretion as it ought to be.¹ The surprise here intended must be accompanied with fraud and circumvention,² or at least by such circumstances as demonstrate that the party had no opportunity to use suitable deliberation, or that there was some influence or management to mislead him. If proper time is not allowed to the party and he acts improvidently, if he is importunately pressed, if those in whom he places confidence make use of strong persuasions, if he is not fully aware of the consequences but is suddenly drawn in to act, if he is not permitted to consult disinterested friends or counsel before he is called upon to act, in circumstances of sudden emergency, or unexpected right or acquisition; in these and many like cases, if there has been great inequality in the bargain, courts of equity will assist the party upon the ground of fraud, imposition, or unconscionable advantage.³

§ 252. Many other cases might be put, illustrative of what is denominated actual or positive fraud.⁴ Among these are cases of the fraudulent suppression or destruction of deeds and other instruments, in violation of, or injury to, the rights of others;⁵ fraudulent awards, with an intent to do injustice;⁶ fraudulent

been so in all times. *But any other surprise never was, and I hope never will be, because it will introduce such a wild uncertainty in the decrees and judgments of the court, as will be of greater consequence than the relief in any case will answer for.*" See *ante*, § 120, note (1).

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 8.

² *Id.*; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 212, 213, 214.

³ *Evans v. Llewellyn*, 1 Cox, 439, 440; s. c. 2 Bro. Ch. 150; *Irnham v. Child*, 1 Bro. Ch. 92; *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 338; *Pickett v. Loggon*, 14 Ves. 215.

⁴ See Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 M. 1, &c.

⁵ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 255 to 260; *Bowles v. Stewart*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 222, 225; *Dormer v. Fortesque*, 3 Atk. 124; *Eyton v. Eyton*, 2 Vern. 380; *Dalton v. Coatsworth*, 1 P. Will. 733.

⁶ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 233, 234; *Brown v. Brown*, 1 Vern. 157, and *Mr. Raithby's note* (1), 159; Com. Dig. Chancery, 2 K. 6; *Champion v. Wenham*, Ambl. 245.

and illusory appointments, and revocations, under powers;¹ fraudulent prevention of acts to be done for the benefit of others, under false statements or false promises;² frauds in relation to trusts of a secret or special nature;³ frauds in verdicts, judgments, decrees, and other judicial proceedings;⁴ frauds in the confusion of boundaries of estates, and matters of partition and dower;⁵ frauds in the administration of charities;⁶ and frauds upon creditors, and other persons, standing upon a like equity.⁷

[* § 252 a. There is a case of some interest, decided by the Court of Chancery Appeal,⁸ where the grounds of equitable interference in setting aside judgments and decrees is considerably discussed by two very eminent equity judges, Lords Justices Cairns and Rolt. The conclusion to which these learned judges came was, that the fraud, to justify such a proceeding in a court of equity, must be actual and positive, and not merely constructive. And we have had occasion to say, in former editions of these Commentaries, that the fraud, to justify a court of equity in setting aside the judgments of courts, either of law or equity, domestic or foreign,⁹ must be that which occurs in the very concoction or procuring of the judgment itself, and something not known to the opposite party at the time, and for not knowing which he is not chargeable with neglect or inattention.

§ 252 b. But a party may be guilty of such fraud, in attempting to enforce a judgment which was originally valid and just, but

¹ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 246 to 252.

² 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 252, 253; *Luttrell v. Lord Waltham*, cited 14 Ves. 290; *Jones v. Martin*, 6 Bro. Parl. Cas. 437; 5 Ves. 266, note; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 13, note (g); id. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, and notes; 2 *Chance on Powers*, ch. 23, § 3, art. 3015 to 3025; *Sugden on Powers*, ch. 6, § 2, p. 377 to 387 (3d edit.).

³ 2 Mad. Pr. Ch. 97, 98; 1 *Hovenden on Frauds*, ch. 13, p. 468, &c.; *Dalbiac v. Dalbiac*, 16 Ves. 124.

⁴ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 236, 237; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 3 M. 1, 3 N. 1, 3 W.; *Davenport v. Stafford*, 8 Beavan, 503; *Langley v. Fisher*, 9 Beavan, 90.

⁵ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 237; *Mitf. Eq. Pl.* 117; 1 *Hovenden on Frauds*, ch. 8, p. 239; id. ch. 9, p. 244.

⁶ 2 *Hovenden on Frauds*, ch. 28, p. 288.

⁷ *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 4, p. 411, &c.; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 4, § 12, 13, 14, and notes; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 3 M. 4; *Jones v. Martin*, 6 Bro. Parl. Cas. 437; 5 Ves. 266, note.

⁸ [* *Patch v. Ward*, 3 *Law Rep.* 3 *Ch. App.* 203.

⁹ *Post*, § 1581 et seq.

which has been subsequently satisfied, or where it was collateral to some other debt or judgment which has been satisfied, or in some way annulled, as to justify a court of equity in enjoining the party from pursuing the same.^{1]}

§ 253. Some of the cases, falling under each of these heads, belong to that large class of frauds commonly called constructive frauds, which will naturally find a place in our future pages. But, as it is the object of these Commentaries, not merely to treat of questions of relief, but also of principles of jurisdiction, a few instances will be here adduced as examples of both species of fraud.

§ 254. In the first place, as to the suppression and destruction of deeds and wills, and other instruments. If an heir should suppress them, in order to prevent another party, as a grantee or devisee, from obtaining the estate vested in him thereby, courts of equity, upon due proof by other evidence, would grant relief, and perpetuate the possession and enjoyment of the estate in such grantee or devisee.² For cases for relief against spoliation come

¹ Paddock v. Palmer, 19 Vt. 581; *post*, § 876 a.]

² See *ante*, § 184, and note, *post*, § 440; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 3, note (u); Hunt v. Matthews, 1 Vern. 408; Wardour v. Binsford, 1 Vern. 452; 2 P. Will. 748, 749; Dalton v. Coatsworth, 1 P. Will. 731; Woodroff v. Burton, cited 1 P. Will. 734; Finch v. Newnham, 2 Vern. 216; Hampden v. Hampden, 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. 250; s. c. cited 1 P. Will. 733; Barnesley v. Powell, 1 Ves. 119, 284, 289; Tucker v. Phipps, 3 Atk. 360. In this last case Lord Hardwicke said: "In this court the rule is not to allow a suit against an executor for a legacy, before a probate of the will; but, in the present case, the plaintiff ought not to be put to the difficulty of going into the spiritual court to cite the defendant, because that would be giving the defendant a great advantage from his own bad acts in destroying or suppressing the will; for here the *spoliation* is, I think, proved so sufficiently as to entitle the plaintiff to come here in the first instance for a decree. As to the *spoliation*, consider it generally as a personal legacy, where the will is destroyed or concealed by the executor, and, I think, in such a case, if the *spoliation* is proved plainly (though the general rule is to cite the executor into the ecclesiastical court), the legatee may properly come here for a decree upon the head of *spoliation* and *suppression*. There are several cases, where, if *spoliation* or *suppression* are proved, it will change the jurisdiction, and give this court a jurisdiction which it had not originally; as in the case of Lord Hunsdon, Hobb. 109, where the title was a title merely at law, yet there being a suppression of the deeds under which that title accrued, the plaintiff had a decree here for possession and quiet enjoyment. As the jurisdiction may be changed with regard to a court of law, why may it not with regard to the spiritual court? and I think the case of Weeks v. Weeks, which came before me some time ago, an authority that it may: here the *spoliation* or *suppression* is certainly fraudulent, voluntary, and malicious, and therefore, differs from the case of Pascall v.

in a favorable light before courts of equity, *in odium spoliatoris*; and where the contents of a suppressed or destroyed instrument are proved, the party (as he ought) will receive the same benefit as if the instrument were produced.¹

§ 255. In the next place, frauds in regard to powers of appointment. A person, having a power of appointment for the benefit of others, shall not, by any contrivance, use it for his own benefit. Thus, if a parent has a power to appoint to such of his children as he may choose, he shall not, by exercising it in favor of a child in a consumption, gain the benefit of it himself, or by a secret agreement with a child, in whose favor he makes it, derive a beneficial interest from the execution of it.² The same rule applies to cases where a parent, having a power to appoint among his children, makes an illusory appointment, by giving to one child a

Pickering, where the *spoliation* did by no means appear to be fraudulent or malicious, but rather inadvertently done, and without any bad design. I think in such cases of malicious and fraudulent *spoliations*, the court will not put the plaintiff under the difficulty of going into the ecclesiastical court, where he must meet with much more difficulty than proving the contents of a deed at law, which has been lost or secreted. For in the spiritual court the plaintiff must prove it a will in writing, and must likewise prove the contents in the very words, which will be a difficulty almost insuperable, and which courts of law do not put a person upon doing; the plaintiff must also prove the whole will, though the remainder of it does not at all belong to or regard his legacy. I think, if this had been a mere personal legacy, the court, under the circumstances of this case, ought to interpose, and the rather, because, in bringing suits against an executor, this court goes further in requiring a probate than courts at law. But here the case is stronger to entitle the plaintiff to a decree, because the legacy is out of real and personal estate both; and as to the real estate, there is no occasion to prove the will in the spiritual court, to entitle the legatee to recover his legacy out of the real estate. This would be clearly the case where the charge is only upon the real estate; and though the heir is entitled to have the personal estate to exonerate his real, yet, if he is made executor, and has, by a voluntary and fraudulent act, put the legatee under such difficulties as make it almost impossible for him to prove the will, it is reasonable to let in the legatee to have his legacy, and leave the executor to pay himself out of the personal estate." [* See *ante*, § 99, n. 4.]

¹ *Saltern v. Melhuish*, Ambler, 247; *Cowper v. Cowper*, 2 P. Will. 652, &c.; *Rex v. Arundel*, Hob. 109; *Hampden v. Hampden*, cited 1 P. Will. 733; 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. 550; *Bowles v. Stewart*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 225.

² *McQueen v. Farquhar*, 11 Ves. 479; *Meyn v. Belcher*, 1 Eden, 138; *Palmer v. Wheeler*, 2 Ball & Beatt. 18; *Sugden on Powers*, ch. 7, § 2, *Morris v. Clarkson*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 111.

nominal and not a substantial share; for, in such a case, courts of equity will treat the execution as a fraud upon the power.¹

§ 256. In the next place, the fraudulent prevention of acts to be done for the benefit of third persons. Courts of equity hold themselves entirely competent to take from third persons, and *a fortiori*, from the party himself, the benefit which he may have derived from his own fraud, imposition, or undue influence, in procuring the suppression of such acts.² Thus, where a person had fraudulently prevented another, upon his death-bed, from suffering a recovery at law, with a view that the estate might devolve upon another person, with whom he was connected; it was adjudged, that the estate ought to be held as if the recovery had been perfected, and that it was against conscience to suffer it to remain where it was.³ So, if a testator should communicate his intention to a devisee, of charging a legacy on his estate, and the devisee should tell him that it is unnecessary, and he will pay it, the legacy being thus prevented, the devisee will be charged with the payment.⁴ And, where a party procures a testator to make a new will, appointing him as executor, and agrees to hold the property in trust for the use of an intended legatee, he will be held a trustee for the latter, upon the like ground of fraud.⁵

§ 257. We may close this head of positive or actual fraud, by referring to another class of frauds, of a very peculiar and distinct character. Gifts and legacies are often bestowed upon persons, upon condition that they shall not marry without the consent of parents, guardians, or other confidential persons. And the question has sometimes occurred, how far courts of equity can or

¹ Sugden on Powers, ch. 7, § 2; ch. 9, § 4; *Butcher v. Butcher*, 9 Ves. 382; 2 Hovenden on Frauds, ch. 23, p. 220, &c.; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 246 to 252; *Campbell v. Horne*, 1 Younge & Coll. N. R. Ch. 664.

² *Bridgman v. Green*, 2 Ves. 627; *Huguenin v. Baseley*, 14 Ves. 289; *ante*, § 252; *post*, § 768.

³ *Luttrell v. Lord Waltham*, cited 14 Ves. 290; s. c. 11 Ves. 638.

⁴ Cited in *Mestaer v. Gillespie*, 11 Ves. 638. See *Goss v. Tracey*, 1 P. Will. 288; 2 Vern. 700; *Thynn v. Thynn*, 1 Vern. 296; *Reach v. Kennigate*, *Ambler*, 67; *Chamberlain v. Agar*, 2 Ves. & B. 259; *Drakeford v. Wilks*, 3 Atk. 539; *Blair v. Bromley*, 2 Phillips, Ch. 354.

⁵ *Thynn v. Thynn*, 1 Vern. 296; *Reach v. Kennigate*, *Ambler*, 67; *Bevenish v. Barnes*, *Prec. Ch.* 3; *Oddham v. Litchford*, 2 Vern. 506; *Barrow v. Greenough*, 3 Ves. 152; *Chamberlain v. Agar*, 2 Ves. & B. 262; *Whitton v. Russell*, 1 Atk. 448. See also cases in note (a) to 3 Ves. 39.

ought to interfere, where such consent is fraudulently withheld by the proper party, for the express purpose of defeating the gift or legacy, or of insisting upon some private and selfish advantage, or from motives of a corrupt, unreasonable, or vicious nature. The doctrine now firmly established upon this subject is, that courts of equity will not suffer the manifest object of the condition to be defeated by the fraud or dishonest, corrupt, or unreasonable refusal of the party whose consent is required to the marriage.¹ It is, indeed, a very delicate and difficult duty to be performed by such courts. But to permit a different rule to prevail, would be to encourage frauds, and to enable a party to withhold consent upon grounds utterly wrong, or upon motives grossly corrupt and unreasonable.

[* § 257 a. In general, a contract which contemplates a fraud upon third parties is regarded as so far illegal between the immediate parties, that neither will be entitled to claim the aid of a court of equity in its enforcement. But in a late case,² before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, it is said, that where an instrument has been entered into between two parties, for a purpose which may be considered fraudulent as against a third party, it may yet be binding as between themselves. Such an intent as to third parties, cannot be interpolated, in construing an instrument as to the rights of the contracting parties, it is here said; nor will a mere suspicion of a fraudulent intent to protect property against the just claims of third parties be sufficient to establish the fact, that the transaction was wholly colorable as between the parties to the instrument, as such a transaction is not, as between themselves, rendered void, because it may have the effect of defeating the claims of creditors.

§ 257 b. And where an appraisal of land damages was made in the absence from the country of the land-owner; and the appraisers fell into a misapprehension, either through their own inattention or misinformation of others, and in consequence, appraised the

¹ *Peyton v. Bury*, 2 P. Will. 625, 628; *Eastland v. Reynolds*, 1 Dick. 317; *Goldsmid v. Goldsmid*, 19 Ves. 368; *Strange v. Smith, Ambler*, 263; *Clarke v. Parker*, 19 Ves. 1, 12; *Mesgrett v. Mesgrett*, 2 Vern. 580; *Merry v. Ryves*, 1 Eden, 1, 4.

² [* *Shaw v. Jeffery*, 13 Moo. P. C. C. 432. This case seems like an attempt to ride safely between two principles of law, but, we apprehend, without any very obvious ground to stand upon, unless it be that fraud must be proved and will not be presumed.

damages at a merely nominal sum, one dollar, when it should have been five thousand dollars, it was held a court of equity would enjoin the party in whose favor the award was made, from setting it up against the suit of the land-owner to recover his actual damages, it being in the nature of a fraud to attempt to enforce such an award, against a party who had not had any opportunity, in fact, to be heard upon the merits.¹

§ 257 *c.* In a recent case,² a question of fraud arose, which will not be likely to occur here, but may nevertheless illustrate the principles upon which the courts proceed. Certain lands held by the earldom of Shrewsbury upon condition not to alien, and confirmed by act of parliament in 1719, were, by another statute in 1803, allowed to be sold and the purchase-money invested in other lands on the same tenure. After the trustees had converted the estates into money, the earl proposed to them to sell them estates worth about £90,000 for the nominal consideration of £1,000. The sanction of the court of chancery was obtained and the transaction was completed in 1834 under the direction of the court, and the lands were conveyed upon the same terms as the original tenure. The succeeding earl disentailed all the lands belonging to the estates of the earldom which he could disentail, and died leaving a will by which he devised them to the plaintiff. This bill was brought to recover from the present earl the lands which had been conveyed to his ancestor in 1834, as above stated. The court held, affirming the decree of the Master of the Rolls, that equity has jurisdiction in cases of this character, even when the plaintiff's title is valid at law, upon the ground of doing more complete justice, inasmuch as a court of law could not restore the £1,000 paid for the conveyance, which equity will do; and as the conveyance was made under the direction of the court, it will embarrass the plaintiffs in proceeding at law, and should properly be removed by a court of equity. It was also held, reversing the decree of the Master of the Rolls, that, as the sale and conveyance were not *bonâ fide*, but a mere voluntary conveyance for a nominal consideration, more a gift than a sale, it must be regarded as a fraud, both upon the court and the act of parliament, with a view to bring the lands under the restraint of alienation, in a manner never intended by either, and must therefore be set aside.

¹ Wells v. Bridgeport Hydraulic Co., 30 Conn. 316.]

² Howard v. The Earl of Shrewsbury, Law Rep. 2 Ch. App. 760.

CHAPTER VII.

CONSTRUCTIVE FRAUD.

- [* § 258. Constructive frauds, or fraud, in law.
- § 259. General definitions of constructive fraud.
- § 260, 261. Marriage brokerage contracts against sound policy and void.
- § 262. The indulgence of the Roman law on this point founded upon a policy not Christian.
- § 263. Money paid under such contract recoverable in equity.
- § 264. Bond given, upon such consideration executed, void.
- § 265. Contracts to procure will in one's favor void.
- § 266. Covert agreements to promote marriage voidable.
- § 267. Such agreements affecting marriage settlements voidable.
- § 268, 269. Colorable contracts to advance marriage voidable, by party deceived.
- § 269. But colorable appearances, to promote marriage, enforced against party deceiving.
- § 270, 271. So if a creditor represent his debt paid, he loses it.
- § 272. But there must be purposed deception.
- § 273. So if the wife secretly convey her property, before marriage, the husband may avoid the conveyance.
- § 274. Contracts in restraint of marriage illegal.
- § 275. Clandestine contracts of marriage, to mislead others, fraudulent.
- § 276. Conditions, in restraint of marriage, void, by the civil law.
- § 277. But not, if only in restraint of marriage with particular persons.
- § 278-280. Such conditions void in equity, unless reasonable.
- § 281. Parents and guardians may control, but not extinguish, the freedom of marriage.
- § 282-285. Illustrations of the subject.
- § 286. Courts of equity hold a very rigid hand upon such contracts, or conditions.
- § 287. If there is no bequest over, the condition held void.
- § 288, 289. Such conditions precedent operate upon real estate, but not upon personal, if unreasonable; conditions subsequent, if unreasonable, void as to both.
- § 290. Conflict of authority upon the last point.
- § 291. Courts of equity only require a substantial performance of conditions.
- § 291 a, 291 b. These points further discussed.
- § 292. Contracts, in restraint of trade generally, illegal; but not at particular places.
- § 293. Agreements not to bid, at public auctions, and puffing, illegal.
- § 293 a, 293 b, 293 c. Combinations, to defeat the free course of legislation, illegal.
- § 294. Numerous instances of illegal contracts.
- § 295. Sale of public offices, a fraud upon public trust.
- § 296, 297. Contracts founded on illegal considerations, void.
- § 298. Equity will not interfere, where parties *in pari delicto*, unless public policy requires it.
- § 299. Each party keeps what he has obtained.
- § 300-301. Parties, not equally in fault, may have relief, by making restitution.

- § 302. This point illustrated by usurious contracts.
- § 303-305. Gaming contracts admit no relief in equity.
- § 306. Illegal contracts, generally, incapable of confirmation.
- § 307, 308. Equity more readily interferes, where there is special confidence.
- § 309, 309 a. Gifts from children to parents, regarded with suspicion, when they are large, and date near the child's majority.
- § 310, 311. The attorney must prove contracts with his clients equal and just.
- § 312, 313. Gifts, from clients, wards, and *cestui que trusts*, void, unless the influence of the relation has ceased.
- § 312 b-312 d. The relation of solicitor and client further discussed with reference to recent decisions, English and American.
- § 314-323. The same rule applies to other confidential relations.
- § 315. The agent cannot buy of his principal, unless upon full disclosure.
- § 316, 316 a. So also if he sell to his principal, or buy for himself, the principal may treat him as trustee.
- § 317-320. The guardian not allowed to bargain with his ward, unless after the confidence of the relation has ceased.
- § 321, 322 a. *Cestui que trust* may have the benefit of all the trustees' acts.
- § 323-327. Equity requires the utmost fairness between the creditor and a surety.
- § 328, 329. Frauds affecting the parties and third persons.
- § 329 a. Abuse of confidence ground of setting aside contract. May result from existing or previous relation, or not.
- § 329 b. Profits made by solicitor or partner belong to client or company.
- § 329 c. But if the principal acquiesce in a purchase by the agent, he is bound.
- § 330. Courts will not allow parties to practise fraud, by means of the statute against frauds.
- § 331. Fraud may be inferred from circumstances, or relation.
- § 332. Courts of equity will protect common sailors.
- § 333. So also where fraud is attempted on third persons.
- § 334-338. As where heirs or expectants are induced to release their rights in fraud of those whose bounty is thus disappointed.
- § 337 b-337 d. Subject further discussed with reference to late cases.
- § 339. But if the giver consents, even by implication, it is no fraud.
- § 340. So also where the releasor is not embarrassed.
- § 341. This is in analogy to the civil law.
- § 342, 343. Post-obit securities of the same character.
- § 344. Such securities allowed to stand for money advanced.
- § 345. So also if affirmed after the duress is removed.
- § 346. Such contract must be repudiated, *in toto*.
- § 347. Sale at auction does not validate the contract.
- § 348. Goods sold on credit, at high prices, allowed at value.
- § 349. Contracts, in fraud of creditors, void.
- § 350, 351. The civil law so regarded them.
- § 352. So also did the common law.
- § 353. Statute against fraudulent conveyances.
- § 354. Must be upon good consideration.
- § 355. Must be *boná fide*.
- § 356, 357. Good as to subsequent creditors, unless made to defraud them.
- § 357-365. Is the fact of indebtedness at the date of the gift conclusive evidence of fraud? And, if so, may subsequent creditors avoid it on that ground?
- § 366-368. This rule only applies to property liable to execution.

- § 369. Conveyances void if made to defeat creditors.
- § 370. Preferences among creditors valid.
- § 371. Such conveyances valid between the parties.
- § 372, 372 a. Settlements, *bonâ fide*, made in contemplation of marriage, or such as equity will decree, after marriage, not fraudulent as to creditors.
- § 373. Courts of equity adopt legal badges of fraud, and often go further than courts of law.
- § 374. How far postnuptial settlements are regarded as voluntary.
- § 375, 376. How far property fraudulently conveyed may be reached after the decease of the debtor.
- § 377. Courts of equity grant relief, as well as courts of law.
- § 378, 379. Secret agreements with creditors, to induce composition, void.
- § 380. So also are secret agreements with the assignee.
- § 381. *Bonâ fide* purchasers will hold estate derived through fraudulent conveyances.
- § 382. Gifts, in fraud of marriage settlements, void.
- § 383. Secret agreements, in fraud of sureties, void.
- § 384-387. One who purposely or negligently misleads a purchaser as to the title of an estate, cannot set up a title in himself.
- § 388, 389. One who keeps secret his title to an estate, while another purchases or improves it, cannot assert such title.
- § 390. So if one conceal a prior mortgage, it will be postponed.
- § 391. Some degree of negligence may fall short of fraud.
- § 392. Purpose of fraud towards another sufficient.
- § 393. The party must virtually countenance the deception.
- § 394. The same rule prevails in the civil law.
- § 395-398. Purchaser bound by an equity of which he had notice.
- § 399-400 c. Actual and constructive notice.
- § 401, 402. Registry in England not conclusive evidence of notice.
- § 403, 404. In America, the registry is conclusive.
- § 405. All persons affected with knowledge of pending litigation.
- § 406. The policy of the rule is to give effect to the judgment.
- § 407. Judgments bind only parties and privies, without notice.
- § 408, 408 a, and notes. Notice to one's agent, in the same transaction, good.
- § 409, 410. If any party in chain of title, acquired title, without notice of an equity such equity will be shut out as to all subsequent holders.
- § 410 a. Constructive and implied notice, not the same.
- § 411. *Bonâ fide* purchaser may protect his equity by outstanding legal title.
- § 412. Tacking securities, excludes intervening ones.
- § 413-417. The grounds of the doctrine considered.
- § 418. The two securities must be held in the same right.
- § 419. The doctrine does not follow out its own analogies.
- § 420. The civil law repudiates the principle.
- § 421. It is firmly established in favor of *bonâ fide* purchasers.
- § 421 a. Right of sureties against subsequent encumbrance.
- § 421 b, 421 c. The effect of notice in perfecting equitable rights.
- § 422-424. Purchase of trustees in fraud of trust set aside.
- § 425-433. Voluntary conveyances as to subsequent purchasers.
- § 434. Equity will not interfere after a *bonâ fide* conveyance.
- § 434 a. Or where the subsequent purchase is not from the same party.
- § 435. The civil law maintained the same rule as in § 434.
- § 436. *Bonâ fide* purchasers great favorites of courts of equity.
- § 437-440. The peculiar advantages of equitable remedies.]

§ 258. HAVING thus considered some of the most important cases of actual, or meditated and intentional fraud, in which courts of equity are accustomed to administer a plenary jurisdiction for relief, we may now pass to another class of frauds, which, as contradistinguished from the former, are treated as legal or constructive frauds. By constructive frauds are meant such acts or contracts, as, although not originating in any actual evil design, or contrivance to perpetuate a positive fraud or injury upon other persons, are yet, by their tendency to deceive or mislead other persons, or to violate private or public confidence, or to impair or injure the public interests, deemed equally reprehensible with positive fraud, and, therefore, are prohibited by law, as within the same reason and mischief, as acts and contracts done *malo animo*. Although, at first view, the doctrines on this subject may seem to be of an artificial, if not of an arbitrary, character; yet, upon closer observation, they will be perceived to be founded in an anxious desire of the law to apply the principle of preventive justice, so as to shut out the inducements to perpetrate a wrong, rather than to rely on mere remedial justice, after a wrong has been committed. By disarming the parties of all legal sanction and protection for their acts, they suppress the temptations and encouragements, which might otherwise be found too strong for their virtue.

§ 259. Some of the cases under this head are principally so treated, because they are contrary to some general public policy, or to some fixed artificial policy of the law. Others, again, rather grow out of some special confidential or fiduciary relation between all the parties, or between some of them, which is watched with especial jealousy and solicitude, because it affords the power and the means of taking undue advantage, or of exercising undue influence over others. And others, again, are of a mixed character, combining, in some degree, the ingredients of the preceding with others of a peculiar nature; but they are chiefly prohibited, because they operate substantially as a fraud upon the private rights, interests, duties, or intentions of third persons, or unconscientiously compromise, or injuriously affect, the private interests, rights, or duties of the parties themselves.

§ 260. And, in the first place, let us consider the cases of constructive fraud, which are so denominated on account of their being contrary to some general public policy, or fixed artificial

policy of the law.¹ Among these may properly be placed contracts and agreements respecting marriage, (commonly called marriage brokage contracts), by which a party engages to give another a compensation, if he will negotiate an advantageous marriage for him. The civil law does not seem to have held contracts of this sort in such severe rebuke; for it allowed *prozenetæ*, or match-makers, to receive a reward for their services, to a limited extent.² And the period is comparatively modern, in which a different doctrine was ingrafted into the common law, and received the high sanction of the House of Lords.³

§ 261. The ground upon which courts of equity interfere in cases of this sort is not upon any notion of damage to the individuals concerned, but from considerations of public policy.⁴ Marriages of a suitable nature, and upon the fairest choice, are of the deepest importance to the well-being of society; since upon the equality, and mutual affection, and good faith of the parties, much of their happiness, sound morality, and mutual confidence must depend. And upon these only can dependence be placed for the due nurture, education, and solid principles of their children. Hence, every temptation to the exercise of an undue influence, or a seduc-

¹ See Mr. Cox's note to *Osmond v. Fitzroy*, 3 P. Will. 131; Newland on Contracts, ch. 33, p. 469, &c. By being contrary to public policy we are to understand that, in the sense of the law, they are injurious to, or subversive of, the public interests. See *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 1 Atk. 352; s. c. 2 Ves. 125.

² Cod. Lib. 5, tit. 1, l. 6.

³ *Hall and Kean v. Potter*, 3 P. Will. 76; 1 Eq. Cas. Abridg. 89, F.; s. c. 3 Lev. 411; Show. Parl. Cas. 76; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10; *Grisley v. Lother*, Hob. 10; *Law v. Law*, Cas. temp. Talb. 140, 142; *Vauxhall Bridge Company v. Spencer*, Jac. 67. In *Boynton v. Hubbard*, 7 Mass. 112, Mr. Chief Justice Parsons said: "We do not recollect a contract which is relieved against in chancery as originally against public policy, which has been sanctioned in courts of law, as legally obligatory on the parties. For although it has been said in chancery, that marriage brokage bonds are good at law, but void in equity, yet no case has been found at law in which those bonds have been holden good." But see *Grisley v. Lother*, Hob. 10, and a case cited in *Hall v. Potter*, 3 Levinz, 411, 412; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10, note (r).

⁴ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10, note (r); Newland on Contracts, ch. 33, p. 469 to 472. "Marriage brokage bonds, which are not fraudulent on either party, are yet void, because they are a fraud on third persons, and a public mischief, as they have a tendency to cause matrimony to be contracted on mistaken principles, and without the advice of friends, and they are relieved against, as a general mischief, for the sake of the public." Per Parsons, Ch. J., in *Boynton v. Hubbard*, 7 Mass. 112.

tive interest, in procuring a marriage, should be suppressed ; since there is infinite danger that it may, under the disguise of friendship, confidence, flattery, or falsehood, accomplish the ruin of the hopes and fortunes of most deserving persons, and especially of females. The natural consequence of allowing any validity to contracts of marriage brokage would be, to introduce improvident, ill-advised, and often fraudulent matches, in which advantage would be taken of youth and inexperience, and warm and generous affections. And the parties would be led on, until they would become the victims of a sordid cunning, and be betrayed into a surrender of all their temporal happiness ; and thus, perhaps, be generally prepared to sink down into gross vice, and an abandonment of conjugal duties. Indeed, contracts of this sort have been not inaptly called a sort of kidnapping into a state of conjugal servitude ;¹ and no acts of the parties can make them valid in a court of equity.²

§ 262. The public policy of thus protecting ignorant and credulous persons from being the victims of secret contracts of this sort, would seem to be as perfectly clear as any question of this nature well can be. And the surprise is, not that the doctrine should have been established in a refined, enlightened, and Christian country, but that its propriety should ever have been made matter of debate. It is one of the innumerable instances, in which the persuasive morality of courts of equity has subdued the narrow, cold, and semi-barbarous dogmas of the common law. The Roman law, while it admitted the validity of such contracts in a qualified form, had motives for such an indulgence, founded upon its own system of conjugal rights, duties, and obligations, very different from what, in our age, would be deemed either safe, or just, or even worthy of toleration.

§ 263. Be the foundation of the doctrine, however, what it may, it is now firmly established, that all such marriage brokage contracts are utterly void, as against public policy ;³ so much so that

¹ *Drury v. Hooke*, 1 Vern. 412.

² *Shirley v. Martin*, cited by Mr. Cox, in 3 P. Will. 75 ; s. c. 1 Ball & Beatty, 357, 358.

³ *Arundel v. Trevillian*, Ch. Rep. 37 [87] ; *Drury v. Hooke*, 1 Vern. 412 ; *Hall v. Potter*, 3 Lev. 411 ; s. c. *Shower*, Parl. Cas. 76 ; *Cole v. Gibson*, 1 Ves. 507 ; *Debenham v. Ox*, 1 Ves. 276 ; *Smith v. Aykwell*, 3 Atk. 566 ; *Hylton v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 548 ; *Striblehill v. Brett*, 2 Vern. 446 ; s. c. *Prec. Ch.* 165 ; 1

they are deemed incapable of confirmation ;¹ and even money paid under them may be recovered back again in a court of equity.² Nor will it make any difference, that the marriage is between persons of equal rank, and fortune, and age ; for the contract is equally open to objection upon general principles, as being of dangerous consequence.³ Indeed, some writers treat contracts of this sort as involving considerations of turpitude, and entitled to be classed with others of a highly vicious nature.⁴

§ 264. The doctrine has gone even farther, and, with a view to suppress all undue influence and improper management, it has been held that a bond, given to the obligee as a remuneration for having assisted the obligor in an elopement and marriage without the consent of friends, is void, even though it is given voluntarily after the marriage, and without any previous agreement for the purpose ; for it may operate an injury to the wife, as well as give encouragement to a grossly iniquitous transaction, calculated to disturb the peace of families, and to involve them in irremediable distress.⁵ It approaches, indeed, very nearly to the case of a premium in favor of seduction.

§ 265. Of a kindred nature, and governed by the same rules, are cases where bonds are given, or other agreements made, as a reward for using influence and power over another person, to induce him to make a will in favor of the obligor, and for his benefit ; for all such contracts tend to the deceit and injury of third persons, and encourage artifices and improper attempts to control the exercise of their free judgment.⁶ But such cases are carefully to be distinguished from those in which there is an agreement among heirs, or other near relatives, to share the estate equally between them, whatever may be the will made by the testator ; for such an agreement is generally made to suppress fraud and un-

Bro. Parl. Cas. 57 ; *Roberts v. Roberts*, 3 P. Will. 74, note (1) ; id. 75, 76 ; *Law v. Law*, 3 P. Will. 391, 394 ; *Williamson v. Gihon*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 357 ; 1 Eq. Cas. Abridg. 98, F.

¹ *Cole v. Gibson*, 1 Ves. 503, 506, 507 ; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10, note (e) ; *Roberts v. Roberts*, 3 P. Will, 74, and Cox's note (1).

² *Smith v. Bruning*, 2 Vern. 392 ; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10 ; *Goldsmith v. Bruning*, 1 Eq. Abridg. 89, F.

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10 ; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 33, p. 470, 471.

⁴ *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 33, p. 469.

⁵ *Williamson v. Gihon*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 356, 362.

⁶ *Debenham v. Ox*, 1 Ves. 276.

due influence, and cannot truly be said to disappoint the testator's intention, if he does not impose any restriction upon his devisee.¹

§ 266. Upon a similar ground, secret contracts made with parents, or guardians, or other guardians, standing in a peculiar relation to the party, whereby, upon a treaty of marriage, they are to receive a compensation, or security, or benefit, for promoting the marriage, or giving their consent to it, are held void. They are in effect equivalent to contracts of bargain and sale of children and other relatives; and of the same public mischievous tendency as marriage brokage contracts.² They are underhand agreements, subversive of the due rights of the parties; and operating as a fraud upon those to whom they are unknown, and yet whose interests are controlled or sacrificed by them. And as marriages are of public concern, and ought to be encouraged, so nothing can more promote this end than open and public agreements on marriage treaties, and the discountenance of all others, which secretly impair them.³

§ 267. Thus, where a bond was taken by a father from his son, upon his marriage, it was held void, as being obtained by undue influence, or undue parental awe.⁴ So, where a party upon his marriage with the daughter of A. gave the latter a bond for a sum of money (in effect a part of his wife's portion on the marriage), in order to obtain his consent to the marriage, it was held utterly void.⁵ So, where, upon a marriage, a settlement was agreed to be made of certain property by relations on each side; and, after the marriage, one of the parties procured an underhand agreement from the husband to defeat the settlement in part; it was set aside, and the original settlement carried into full effect.⁶ In all these

¹ *Beckley v. Newland*, 2 P. Will. 182; *Harwood v. Tooke*, 2 Sim. 192; *Wethered v. Wethered*, id. 183; *post*, § 785.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10; *Keat v. Allen*, 2 Vern. 588; s. c. Prec. Ch. 267; 1 Madd. Pr. Ch. 231, 232.

³ *Roberts v. Roberts*, 3 P. Will. 74, and Mr. Cox's note (1); *Payton v. Bladwell*, 1 Vern. 240; *Redman v. Redman*, 1 Vern. 348; *Gale v. Lindo*, 1 Vern. 475; *Cole v. Gibson*, 1 Ves. 503; *Morrison v. Arbuthnot*, 1 Bro. Ch. 547, note; s. c. 8 Bro. Parl. Cas. 247 (by Tomlins); 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10, 11.

⁴ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10, 11; *Williamson v. Gihon*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 362; *Anon.*, 2 Eq. Abr. 187.

⁵ *Keat v. Allen*, 2 Vern. 588; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 11; 1 Eq. Cas. Abr. 90, F. 5.

⁶ *Payton v. Bladwell*, 1 Vern. 240; *Stribblehill v. Brett*, 2 Vern. 445; Prec. in Ch. 165.

and the like cases, courts of equity proceed upon the broad and general ground, that that which is the open and public treaty and agreement upon marriage, shall not be lessened, or in any way infringed by any private treaty or agreement.¹ The latter is a meditated fraud upon innocent parties, and upon this account properly held invalid. But it has a higher foundation in the security which it is designed to throw round the contract of marriage, by placing all parties upon the basis of good faith, mutual confidence, and equality of condition.²

§ 268. The same principle pervades the class of cases where persons, upon a treaty of marriage, by any concealment, or misrepresentation, mislead other parties, or do acts, which are by other secret agreements reduced to mere forms, or become inoperative. In all cases of such agreements, relief will, upon the same enlightened public policy, be granted to the injured parties. For equity insists upon principles of the purest good faith; and nothing could be more subversive of it than to allow parties, by holding out false colors, to escape from their own solemn engagements.³

§ 269. Thus, where a parent declined to consent to a marriage with the intended husband, on account of his being in debt; and the brother of the latter gave a bond for the debt, to procure such consent; and the intended husband then gave a secret counter-bond to his brother to indemnify him against the first; and the marriage proceeded upon the faith of the extinguishment of the debt; the counter-bond so given was treated as a fraud upon the marriage (*contra fidem tabularum nuptialium*); and all parties were held entitled as if it had not been given.⁴

§ 270. So, where the parent, upon a marriage of his son, made a settlement of an annuity or rent-charge upon the wife, in full of her jointure; and the son secretly gave a bond of indemnity,

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 11; 1 Eq. Cas. Abr. 90, F. 5, 6.

² *Lamlee v. Hanman*, 2 Vern. 499, 500; *Pitcairne v. Ogbourne*, 2 Ves. Sen. 375; *Neville v. Wilkinson*, 1 Bro. Ch. 543, 547; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 11, and note (x).

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 11, and note; *Lamlee v. Hanman*, 2 Vern. 499; *McNeil v. Cahill*, 2 Bligh, 228; *England v. Downs*, 2 Beavan, 522. [* See *Hammersley v. Baron de Biel*, 12 Clark & Fin. 45.]

⁴ *Redman v. Redman*, 1 Vern. 348; *Scott v. Scott*, 1 Cox, 366; *Turton v. Benson*, 1 P. Will. 496; *Morrison v. Arbuthnot*, 8 Brown, Parl. Cases, p. 247, by Tomlins; 1 Bro. Ch. 447, note.

of the same date, to his parent, against the annuity or rent-charge; it was held void, as a fraud upon the faith of the marriage contract; for it affected to put the female party contracting for marriage, in one situation by the articles, and, in fact, put her in another and worse situation by a private agreement.¹ So, where a brother, on the marriage of his sister, let her have a sum of money privately, that her fortune might appear to be as much as was insisted on by the other side, and the sister gave a bond to the brother to repay it; the bond was set aside.²

§ 271. And where, upon a treaty of marriage, a party, to whom the intended husband was indebted, concealed his own debt, and misrepresented to the wife's father the amount of the husband's debts, the transaction was treated as a fraud upon the marriage; and the creditor was prevented by injunction from enforcing his debt, although it did not appear that there was any actual stipulation on the part of the wife's father, in respect to the amount of the husband's debts.³ Upon this occasion the lord chancellor said: "The principle on which all these cases have been decided, is, that faith in such contracts is so essential to the happiness both of the parents and children, that whoever treats fraudulently on such an occasion, shall not only not gain, but even lose by it.⁴ Nay, he shall be obliged to make his representation good, and the parties shall be placed in the same situation as if he had been scrupulously exact in the performance of his duty."⁵

§ 272. In all these cases, and those of a like nature, the distinct ground of relief is the meditated fraud or imposition practised by one of the parties upon third persons, by intentional concealment or misrepresentation. And, therefore, if the parties act under a mutual innocent mistake, and with entire good faith, the conceal-

¹ *Palmer v. Neave*, 11 Ves. 165; *Scott v. Scott*, 1 Cox, 366, 378; *Lamlee v. Hanman*, 2 Vern. 466.

² *Gale v. Lindo*, 2 Vern. 475; *Lamlee v. Hanman*, 2 Vern. 499; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 11.

³ *Neville v. Wilkinson*, 1 Bro. Ch. 543; s. c. 3 P. Will. 74, Mr. Cox's note; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 11, note (x); 3 Ves. 461; 16 Ves. 125.

⁴ *Ibid.* See also *Montefiori v. Montefiori*, 1 W. Black. 363; s. c. cited 1 Bro. Ch. 548.

⁵ *Ibid.* See also *Thompson v. Harrison*, 1 Cox, 344; *Eastabrook v. Scott*, 3 Ves. 461; *Scott v. Scott*, 1 Cox, 366; *Hunsden v. Cheyney*, 2 Vern. 150; *Beverley v. Beverley*, 2 Vern. 133; *Montefiori v. Montefiori*, 1 W. Black. 363; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 11, note (x); *Vauxhall Bridge v. Spencer*, Jac. 67.

ment or misrepresentation of a material fact will not induce the court to compel the party concealing it, or affirming it, to make it good, or to place the other party in the same situation as if the fact were as the latter supposed.¹ There must be some ingredient of fraud, or some wilful misstatement or concealment, which has misled the other side.

§ 273. Upon a similar ground, a settlement, secretly made by a woman, in contemplation of marriage, of her own property to her own separate use, without her intended husband's privity, will be held void, as it is in derogation of the marital rights of the husband,² and a fraud upon his just expectations.³ And a secret

¹ *Mereweather v. Shaw*, 2 Cox, 124; *Scott v. Scott*, 1 Cox, 366; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 11; *Pitcairne v. Ogbourne*, 2 Ves. 375.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 11, and note (z); *id.* ch. 2, § 6, note (o); *Jones v. Martin*, 3 Anst. 882; s. c. 5 Ves. 266, note; *Fortescue v. Hennah*, 19 Ves. 66; *Bowes v. Strathmore*, 2 Bro. Ch. 345; s. c. 2 Cox, 28; 1 Ves. Jr. 22; 6 Bro. Par. Cas. (by Tomlins) 427; *Ball v. Montgomery*, 2 Ves. Jr. 194; *Carlton v. Earl of Dorset*, 2 Vern. 17; *Gregor v. Kemp*, 3 Swanst. 404, note; *Goddard v. Snow*, 1 Russell, 485; *Tucker v. Andrews*, 13 Maine, 124; *Waller v. Armistead*, 2 Leigh, 11; *Manes v. Durant*, 2 Rich. Eq. 404; *McAfee v. Ferguson*, 9 B. Moproe, 475; *England v. Downs*, 2 Beavan, 522. On this occasion, Lord Langdale said; "Joan Mason was a widow with three children, and under the will of her first husband, she was entitled to some freehold and leasehold property, to some furniture, and to the stock in trade, with which she carried on business as a victualler. Contemplating a second marriage, she considered that she ought to make a provision for her children by the first, and being informed that a will which she had made, would, upon her marriage, become ineffectual, she made a settlement, and thereby provided that a portion of her freehold property should be subjected to her own power of appointment, but that subject to such power of appointment, that part of her estate over which the power extended, together with all the rest of her property, should be limited to her own separate use for her life, with remainder for her three daughters in the manner therein mentioned. In the execution of this settlement, so far as it made provision for her children, she was performing a moral duty; in the circumstances in which she was placed it was clearly her duty, before she placed herself and her property in the power of her second husband, to secure a provision for her children by her first husband, from whom her property was derived; but in performing a duty towards her children, she had no right to act fraudulently towards her second husband. If a woman entitled to property, enters into a treaty for marriage, and during the treaty represents to her intended husband that she is so entitled, that upon the marriage he will become entitled *jure mariti*, and if, during the

³ *Ibid.* *Lance v. Norman*, 2 Ch. Rep. 41[79]; *Blanchet v. Foster*, 2 Ves. 264; *England v. Downs*, 2 Beavan, 522.

conveyance made by a woman, under like circumstances, in favor of a person for whom she is under no moral obligation to provide, would be treated in the like manner. But if she should only reasonably provide for her children, by a former marriage under circumstances of good faith,¹ it would be otherwise.² In like manner, if, previous to her marriage, a woman should represent herself to her intended husband to be possessed of property, which she should secretly convey away before the marriage, the husband

same treaty, she clandestinely conveys away the property, in such manner as to defeat his marital right, and secure to herself the separate use of it, and the concealment continues till the marriage takes place, there can be no doubt but that a fraud is thus practised on the husband, and he is entitled to relief. The equity which arises in cases of this nature depends upon the peculiar circumstances of each case, as bearing upon the question, whether the facts proved do or do not amount to sufficient evidence of fraud practised on the husband. It is not doubted that proof of direct misrepresentations, or of wilful concealment with intent to deceive the husband, would entitle him to relief; but it is said that mere concealment is not, in such a case, any evidence of fraud, and that if a man without making any inquiry as to a woman's affairs and property, thinks fit to marry her, he must take her and her property as he finds them, and has no right to complain, if, in the absence of any care on his part, she has taken care of herself and her children without his knowledge. This proposition, however, cannot be admitted as stated; and clearly a woman in such circumstances, can only reconcile all her moral duties by making a proper settlement on herself and her children, with the knowledge of her intended husband. If both the property and the mode of its conveyance pending the marriage treaty, were concealed from the intended husband, as was the case in *Goddard v. Snow*, there is still a fraud practised on the husband. The non-acquisition of property, of which he had no notice, is no disappointment, but still his legal right to property actually existing is defeated, and the vesting and continuance of a separate power in his wife over property which ought to have been his, and which is, without his consent, made independent of his control, is a surprise upon him, and might, if previously known, have induced him to abstain from the marriage. Nevertheless, cases have occurred in which concealment, or rather the non-existence of communication to the husband, has not been held fraudulent, and whether fraud is made out must depend on the circumstances of each case, — as an unmarried woman has a right to dispose of her property as she pleases, and as a conveyance made immediately before her marriage is *prima facie* good, it is to be impeached only by the proof of fraud." *Taylor v. Pugh*, 1 Hare, 608, 613, 616; *De Manville v. Compton*, 1 Ves. & Beam. 354.

¹ But see *Terry v. Hopkins*, 1 Hill, Ch. 1; *Ramsay v. Joyce*, 1 McMullan's Eq. 237, 251; *Manes v. Durant*, 2 Rich. Eq. 404.

² *Ibid.*; *King v. Cotton*, 2 P. Will. 357, 674; *St. George v. Wake*, 1 Mylne & Keen, 610; *England v. Downs*, 2 Beav. 522; *De Manville v. Compton*, 1 Ves. & Beam. 354.

would be entitled to relief against such conveyance.¹ However, circumstances may occur which may deprive the husband of any remedy, as if before the marriage he acquires a knowledge of the prior settlement,² or if he has so conducted himself after the settlement, that the wife cannot, without dishonor to herself, live with him [or cannot, without disgrace, retire from the marriage, as when the intended husband induced her to cohabit with him before marriage].³

§ 274. It is upon the same ground of public policy, that contracts in restraint of marriage are held void.⁴ A reciprocal engagement between a man and a woman to marry each other is unquestionably good.⁵ But a contract, which restrains a person from marrying at all, or from marrying anybody, except a particular person, without enforcing a corresponding reciprocal obligation on that person, is treated as mischievous to the general interests of society, which are promoted by the encouragement and support of suitable marriages.⁶ Courts of equity have in this respect followed, although not to an unlimited extent, the doctrine of the civil law, that marriage ought to be free.⁷

§ 275. Where, indeed, the obligation to marry is reciprocal, although the marriage is to be deferred to some future period, there may not be, as between the parties, any objection to the contract in itself, if in all other respects it is entered into in good faith, and there is no reason to suspect fraud, imposition, or undue influence.⁸ But, even in these cases, if the contract is designed

¹ *England v. Downs*, 2 Beavan, 542. [* See *Williams v. Carle*, 2 Stockton, Ch. 543.]

² See *Logan v. Simmons*, 3 Iredell, Eq. 487; *Manes v. Durant*, 2 Rich. Eq. 404; *Ashton v. McDougall*, 5 Beavan, 56; *Griggs v. Staples*, 13 Jur. 32; *Maher v. Hobbs*, 2 Y. & C. Exch. Cas. 317; *Terry v. Hopkins*, 1 Hills, Ch. 4.

³ *Taylor v. Pugh*, 1 Hare, 608.

⁴ *Hartley v. Rice*, 10 East, 22; *Lowe v. Peers*, 4 Burr. 2225; *Woodhouse v. Shepley*, 2 Atk. 539, 540; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 33, p. 472 to 476; 2 *White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas.* 89, and notes.

⁵ *Cock v. Richards*, 10 Ves. 438; *Key v. Bradshaw*, 2 Vern. 102.

⁶ 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 4, § 10; *Baker v. White*, 2 Vern. 215; *Woodhouse v. Shepley*, 2 Atk. 535; *Lowe v. Peers*, 4 Burr. 2225; *Phillips v. Medbury*, 7 Conn. 568; *Cock v. Richards*, 10 Ves. 429; *Key v. Bradshaw*, 2 Vern. 102; *Atkins v. Farr*, 1 Atk. 287; s. c. 2 *Eq. Abridg.* 247, 248.

⁷ *Dig. Lib.* 35, tit. 1, l. 62, 63, 64; *Key v. Bradshaw*, 2 Vern. 102; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 4, § 10.

⁸ *Lowe v. Peers*, 4 Burr. 2229, 2230; *Key v. Bradshaw*, 2 Vern. 102.

by the parties to impose upon third persons, as upon parents, or friends standing *in loco parentis*, or in some other particular relation to the parties, so as to disappoint their bounty, or to defeat their intentions in the settlement or disposal of their estates; there, if the contract is clandestine, and kept secret for this purpose, it will be treated by courts of equity as a fraud upon such parents or other friends, and as such be set aside; or the equities will be held the same as if it had not been entered into.¹ The general ground upon which this doctrine is sustained is, that parents, and other friends, standing *in loco parentis*, are thereby induced to act differently in relation to the advancement of their children and relatives, from what they would if the facts were known; and the best influence which might be exerted in persuading their children and relatives to withdraw from an unsuitable match is entirely taken away. To give effect to such contracts would be an encouragement to persons to lie upon the watch to procure unequal matches against the consent of parents and friends, and to draw on improvident and clandestine marriages, to the destruction of family confidence, and the disobedience of parental authority.² These are objects of so great importance to the best interest of society, that they can scarcely be too deeply fixed in the public policy of a nation, and especially of a Christian nation.

§ 276. In the civil law a strong desire was manifested to aid in the establishment of marriages, as has been already intimated.³ And hence, all conditions annexed to gifts, legacies, and other valuable interests, which went to restrain marriages generally, were deemed inconsistent with public policy, and held void. A gift, therefore, to a woman, of land, if she should not marry, was held an absolute gift. “*Mæviæ, si non nupserit, fundum quum morietur, lego; potest dici, et si nupserit, eam confestim ad legatum admitti.*”⁴ *Si testator rogasset hæredem, ut restituat hæreditatem mulieri, si non nupsisset; dicendum erit compellendum hæredem, si suspectam dicat hæreditatem, adire et restituere eam*

¹ *Woodhouse v. Shepley*, 2 Atk. 535, 539; *Cock v. Richards*, 10 Ves. 436, 438.

² *Woodhouse v. Shepley*, 2 Atk. 539; *Cock v. Richards*, 10 Ves. 438, 539; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 33, p. 476.

³ *Ante*, § 260.

⁴ *Pothier, Pand. Lib. 35, tit. 1, n. 33; Dig. Lib. 35, tit. 1, l. 72, § 5.*

mulieri, etiamsi nupsisset.”¹ So, a gift to a father, if his daughter, who is under his authority (*in potestate*), should not marry, was treated as an absolute gift; the condition being held void.² The avowed ground of these decisions was, that all such conditions were a fraud upon the law which favored marriage; “*Quod in fraudem legis ad impediendas nuptias scriptum est, nullam vim habet.*”³

§ 277. But a distinction was taken in the civil law between such general restraints of marriage, and a special restraint, as to marrying or not marrying a particular person; the latter being deemed not unjustifiable. Thus, a gift, upon condition that a woman should not marry Titius, or not marry Titius, Seius, or Mævius, was held valid.⁴ And the distinction was in some cases even more refined; for, if a legacy was given to a wife upon condition that she should not marry, while she had children (*si a liberis, ne nupsarit*), the condition was nugatory; but, if it was, that she should not marry while she had children in puberty (*si a liberis impuberibus ne nupsarit*), it was good.⁵ And the reason given is, that the care of children, rather than widowhood, might be enjoined; “*Quia magis cura liberorum, quam viduitas, injungeretur.*”⁶

§ 278. Courts of equity, in acting upon cases of a similar nature, have been in no small degree influenced by these doctrines of the civil law.⁷ But it has been doubted, whether the same grounds upon which the Roman law acted, can or ought to be acted on in a Christian country, under the common law. Lord Rosslyn has endeavored to account for the introduction of these doctrines into the English courts of equity, from the desire of the latter to adopt, upon legatary questions, the rules of the ecclesiastical courts, which were borrowed directly from the civil law. And speaking upon the subject of the rule of the civil law, as to conditions in restraint of marriage, he said:⁸ “How it should

¹ Pothier, Pand. Lib. 35, tit. 1, n. 33; Dig. Lib. 36, tit. 1, l. 65, § 1.

² Pothier, Pand. Lib. 35, tit. 1, n. 35.

³ Pothier, Pand. Lib. 35, tit. 1, n. 35; Dig. Lib. 35, tit. 1, l. 79, § 4.

⁴ Pothier, Pand. Lib. 35, tit. 1, n. 34; Dig. Lib. 35, tit. 1, l. 63, 64.

⁵ Pothier, Pand. Lib. 35, tit. 1, n. 34; Dig. Lib. 35, tit. 1, l. 62, § 2.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10; Stackpole v. Beaumont, 3 Ves. Jr. 96.

⁸ Stackpole v. Beaumont, 3 Ves. Jr. 96, per Lord Rosslyn. See also Lord Thurlow's judgment, in the case of Scott v. Tyler, 2 Bro. Ch. 487; s. c. 2 Dick. 712; 2 White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas. and notes.

ever have come to be a rule of decision in the Ecclesiastical Court is impossible to be accounted for, but upon this circumstance, that, in the unenlightened ages, soon after the revival of letters, there was a blind, superstitious adherence to the text of the civil law. They never reasoned; but only looked into the books and transferred the rules without weighing the circumstances, as positive rules to guide them. It is beyond imagination, except from that circumstance, how, in a Christian country, they should have adopted the rule of the Roman law with regard to conditions as to marriage. First, where there is an absolute, unlimited liberty of divorce, all rules as to marriage are inapplicable to a system of religion and law, where divorce is not permitted. Next, the favor to marriage, and the objection to the restraint of it, were a mere political regulation, applicable to the circumstances of the Roman empire at that time, and inapplicable to other countries. After the civil war, the depopulation occasioned by it led to habits of celibacy. In the time of Augustus, the Julian law, which went too far, and was corrected by the *Lex Papia Poppæa*, not only offered encouragement to marriage, but laid heavy impositions upon celibacy. That being established, as a rule in restraint of celibacy (it is an odd expression), and for the encouragement of all persons who would contract marriage, it necessarily followed, that no person could act contrary to it by imposing restraints directly contrary to the law. Therefore, it became a rule of construction, that these conditions were null. It is difficult to apply that to a country where there is no law to restrain individuals from exercising their own discretion, as to the time and circumstances of the marriage which their children, or objects of bounty, may contract. It is perfectly impossible now, whatever it might have been formerly, to apply that doctrine, not to lay conditions to restrain marriage under the age of twenty-one, to the law of England; for it is directly contrary to the political law of the country. There can be no marriage under the age of twenty-one, without the consent of the parent."

§ 279. It is highly probable, that this view of the origin of the English doctrine, as to conditions in restraint of marriage, annexed to gifts, legacies, and other conveyances of interests, is historically correct.¹ But whether it be so or not, it may be affirmed, without

¹ See *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Bro. Ch. 487; s. c. 2 Dick. 712; *Clarke v. Parker*, 19 Ves. 13; *Reynish v. Martin*, 3 Atk. 330, 331, 332; 1 Roper on Legacies, by

fear of contradiction, that the doctrine on this subject, at present maintained and administered by courts of equity (for it has under-

White, ch. 13, § 1, p. 654. Lord Thurlow, in *Scott v. Tyler* (2 Dick. 716 to 721), has traced out with much learning and ability, the gradual introduction and progress of the civil-law doctrine, through the instrumentality of the canon law, into the law of England. I gladly extract a portion of his statements, as they may tend to instruct the student more exactly in a branch of the law, confessedly not without some anomalies. "The earlier cases," said he, "refer, in general terms to the canon law, as the rule by which all legacies are to be governed. By that law, undoubtedly, all conditions which fell within the scope of this objection, the restraint of marriage, are reputed void; and, as they speak, *pro non adjertis*. But those cases go no way towards ascertaining the nature and extent of the objection. Towards the latter end of the last, and beginning of the present century, the matter is more loosely handled. The canon law is not referred to (professedly, at least), as affording a distinct and positive rule for annulling the obnoxious conditions. On the contrary, they are treated as partaking of the force allowed them by the law of England. But, in respect to their imposing a restraint of marriage, they are treated at the same time as unfavorable and contrary to the common weal and good order of society. It is reasoned, that parental duty and affection are violated, when a child is stripped of its just expectations. That such an intention is improbably imputed to a parent; particularly in those instances where there was no misalliance; as in marriage with the houses of Bellases, Bertie, Cecil, and Semphile; which the parent, if he had been alive, would probably have approved. These ideas apply indifferently to bequests of lands and of money, and were, in fact, so applied in one very remarkable case. Nay, to avoid the supposed force of these obnoxious conditions, strained constructions were made upon doubtful signs of consent; and every mode of artificial reasoning was adopted to relax their rigor. This was thought more practicable, by calling them conditions subsequent; although, if that had made such difference, they were, and, indeed, must have been generally, conditions precedent, as being the terms on which the legacy was made to vest. At length, it became a common phrase, that such conditions were only *in terrorem*. I do not find it was ever seriously supposed to have been the testator's intention to hold out the terror of that, which he never meant should happen; but the court disposed of such conditions, so as to make them amount to no more. On the other hand, some provisions against improvident matches, especially during infancy, or to a certain age, could not be thought an unreasonable precaution for parents to entertain. The custom of London has been found reasonable, which forfeits the portion, on the marriage of an infant orphan without consent. The Court of Chancery is in the constant habit of restraining and punishing such marriages. And the legislature has at length adopted the same idea, as far as it was thought general regulation could, in sound policy go. In this situation the matter was found about the middle of the present century; when doubts occurred, which divided the sentiments of the first men of the age. The difficulty seems to have consisted principally in reconciling the cases, or, rather, the arguments on which they proceeded. The better opinion, or, at least, that which prevailed,

gone some important changes), is far better adapted to the exigencies of modern society throughout Christendom, than that which was asserted by the Roman law. While it upholds the general freedom of choice in marriages, it at the same time has a strong tendency to preserve a just control and influence in parents, in regard to the marriages of their children, and a reasonable power in all persons to qualify and restrict their bounty in such a manner, and on such conditions, as the general right of dominion over property in a free country justifies and protects, upon grounds of general convenience and safety.

§ 280. The general result of the modern English doctrine on this subject (for it will not be found easy to reconcile all the

was, that devises of land with which the canon law never had any concern, should follow the rule of the common law; and that legacies of money being of that sort, should follow the rule of the canon law. Lands devised, charges upon it, powers to be exercised over it, money legacies referring to such charges, money to be laid out in lands (though I do not find this yet resolved), follow the rule of the common law; and such trusts are to be executed with analogy to it. Mere money legacies follow the rule of the canon law; and all trusts of that nature are to be executed with analogy to that. But still, if I am not mistaken, the question remains unresolved: What is the nature and extent of that rule, as applied to conditions in restraint of marriage? The canon law prevails in this country only so far as it hath been actually received with such ampliations and limitations as time and occasion have introduced; and subject at all times to the municipal law. It is founded in the civil law; consequently the tenets of that law also may serve to illustrate the received rules of the canon law. By the civil law, the provision of a child was considered as a debt of nature, of which the laws of civil society also exacted the payment; insomuch that a will was regarded as inofficious which did not in some sort satisfy it. By the positive institutions of that law, it was also provided, *Si quis cælibatûs, vel viduitatis conditionem hæredi, legatariove injunxerit; hæres, legatariusve e conditione liberi sunt; neque eo minus delatam hæreditatem, legatumve, ex hac lege consequantur.* In ampliation of this law, it seems to have been well settled in all times, that, if, instead of creating a condition absolutely enjoining celibacy, or widowhood, the same be referred to the advice or discretion of another, particularly an interested person, it is deemed a fraud on the law, and treated accordingly; that is, the condition so imposed is holden for void. Upon the same principle, in further ampliation of the law, all distinction is abolished between precedent and subsequent conditions; for it would be an easy evasion of such a law, if a slight turn of the phrase were allowed to put it aside. It has rather, therefore, been construed, that the condition is performed by the marriage, which is the only lawful part of the condition, or by asking the consent, for that also is a lawful condition; and, for the rest, the condition not being lawful, is holden *pro non adjectâ.*"

cases)¹ may be stated in the following summary manner. Conditions annexed to gifts, legacies, and devises, in restraint of marriage, are not void, if they are reasonable in themselves, and do not directly or virtually operate as an undue restraint upon the freedom of marriage. If the condition is in restraint of marriage generally, then, indeed, as a condition against public policy, and the due economy and morality of domestic life, it will be held utterly void.² And so, if the condition is not in restraint of marriage generally, but still the prohibition is of so rigid a nature, or so tied up to peculiar circumstances, that the party, upon whom it is to operate, is unreasonably restrained in the choice of marriage, it will fall under the like consideration.³ Thus, where a legacy was given to a daughter, on condition that she should not marry without consent, or should not marry a man who was not seised of an estate in fee-simple of the clear yearly value of £500, it was held to be a void condition, as leading to a probable prohibition of marriage.⁴ [And in a later case it was held that a general condition in restraint of marriage is good as to the testator's widow, but not good with respect to any other person.]

§ 281. But the same principles of public policy which annul such conditions, when they tend to a general restraint of marriage, will confirm and support them when they merely prescribe such reasonable and provident regulations and sanctions, as tend to protect the individual from those melancholy consequences to which an over-hasty, rash, or precipitate match would probably lead.⁵ If parents, who must naturally feel the deepest solicitude for the welfare of their children, and other near relatives and friends, who may well be presumed to take a lively interest in the happiness of those with whom they are associated by ties of kindred, or friendship, could not, by imposing some restraints upon their bounty, guard the inexperience and ardor of youth against

¹ *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Bro. Ch. 487; 2 Dick. 718; *Stackpole v. Beaumont*, 3 Ves. 95; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10, note (q).

² *Keily v. Monck*, 3 Ridgw. P. 205, 244, 247, 261; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10, note (q); *Rishton v. Cobb*, 9 Sim. 615; *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Bro. Ch. 487; *Harvey v. Aston*, Com. Rep. 726; s. c. 1 Atk. 361.

³ *Keily v. Monck*, 3 Ridgw. Parl. 205, 244, 247, 261; 1 Eq. Abridg. p. 110, *Condition*, C. in Marg.; *Morley v. Rennoldson*, 2 Hare, 570.

⁴ *Keily v. Monck*, 3 Ridgw. Parl. 205, 244, 247, 261; 1 Chitty, Eq. Dig. *Marriage*, W.

⁵ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10, note (q).

the wiles and delusions of the crafty and the corrupt, who should seek to betray them from motives of the grossest selfishness, the law would be lamentably defective, and would, under the pretence of upholding the institution of marriage, subvert its highest purposes. It would, indeed, encourage the young and the thoughtless to exercise a perfect freedom of choice in marriage; but it would be at the expense of all the best objects of the institution, the preservation of domestic happiness, the security of private virtue, and the rearing of families in habits of sound morality, and filial obedience and reverence. Such a reproach does not belong to the common law in our day; and, least of all, can it be justly attributed to courts of equity.

§ 282. Mr. Fonblanque has, with great propriety, remarked: "The only restrictions which the law of England imposes are such as are dictated by the soundest policy, and approved by the purest morality. That a parent, professing to be affectionate, shall not be unjust; that, professing to assert his own claim, he shall not disappoint or control the claims of nature, nor obstruct the interests of the community; that what purports to be an act of generosity shall not be allowed to operate as a temptation to do that which militates against nature, morality, or sound policy, or to restrain from doing that which would serve and promote the essential interests of society; [these] are rules which cannot reasonably be reprobated, as harsh infringements of private liberty, or even reproached as unnecessary restraints on its free exercise. On these considerations are founded those distinctions which have from time to time been recognized in our courts of equity, respecting testamentary conditions with reference to marriage."¹

§ 283. Godolphin also has very correctly laid down the general principle. "All conditions against the liberty of marriage are unlawful. But, if the conditions are only such, as whereby marriage is not absolutely prohibited, but only in part restrained, as in respect to time, place, or person, then such conditions are not utterly to be rejected."² Still, this language is to be understood with proper limitations; that is to say, that the restraints upon marriage, in respect to time, place, or person, are reasonably asserted. For it is obvious that restraints as to time, place, and person may be so framed as to operate a virtual prohibition upon

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10, note (g).

² Godolphin's Orphan's Legacy, Pt. 1, ch. 15, § 1.

marriage, or, at least, upon its most important and valuable objects. As, for instance, a condition that a child should not marry until fifty years of age;¹ or should not marry any person inhabiting in the same town, county, or State; or should not marry any person who was a clergyman, a physician, or a lawyer, or any person, except of a particular trade or employment; for these would be deemed a mere evasion or fraud upon the law.²

§ 284. On the other hand, some provisions against improvident matches, especially during infancy, or until a certain age of discretion, cannot be deemed an unreasonable precaution for parents and other persons to affix to their bounty.³ Thus, a legacy given to a daughter to be paid her at twenty-one years of age, if she does not marry until that period, would be held good, for it postpones marriage only to a reasonable age of discretion.⁴ So, a condition, annexed to a gift or legacy, that the party should not marry without the consent of parents or trustees, or other persons specified, is held good; for it does not impose an unreasonable restraint upon marriage; and it must be presumed that the person selected will act with good faith and sound discretion in giving or withholding consent.⁵ The civil law, indeed, seems, on this point, to have adopted a very different doctrine; holding that the requirement of the consent of a third person, and especially of an interested person, is a mere fraud upon the law.⁶

§ 285. Other cases have been stated, which are governed by the same principles. Thus it has been said, that a condition not to marry a widow is no unlawful injunction; for it is not in general restraint of marriage. So, a condition that a widow shall not marry, is not unlawful, neither is an annuity during widowhood only.⁷ A condition to marry, or not to marry, Titius or

¹ But see 1 Roper on Legacies, ch. 13, § 2, p. 716, edit. by White.

² See *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Dick. 721, 722; 2 Brown, Ch. 488.

³ *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Dick. 719.

⁴ See *Stackpole v. Beaumont*, 3 Ves. 96, 97; *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Dick. 721, 722, 724.

⁵ *Desbody v. Boyville*, 2 P. Will. 547; *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Bro. Ch. 431, 485; 2 Dick. 712; *Clarke v. Parker*, 19 Ves. 1; *Lloyd v. Branton*, 3 Meriv. 108; *Dashwood v. Bulkley*, 10 Ves. 229.

⁶ Lord Thurlow, in *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Dick. 720; Ayliffe, Pand. B. 3, tit. 21, p. 374.

⁷ *Lloyd v. Lloyd*, 10 Eng. Law & Eq. 139. Conditions requiring widowhood, were generally void by the civil law, when the legacy was to the party herself;

Mævia, is good. So a condition, prescribing due ceremonies and a due place of marriage, is good. And so any other conditions of a similar nature, if not used evasively, as a covert purpose to restrain marriage generally.¹ [And on the same general principle, a condition that the legatee shall not become a nun is valid; and although the will contain no bequest over, the legacy is forfeited if the legatee does become a nun.²]

§ 286. But courts of equity are not generally inclined to lend an indulgent consideration to conditions in restraint of marriage;³ and on that account (being in no small degree influenced by the doctrines of the civil and canon law), they have not only constantly manifested an anxious desire to guard against any abuse, to which the giving of one person any degree of control over another might eventually lead; but they have, on many occasions, resorted to subtleties and artificial distinctions, in order to escape from the positive directions of the party imposing such conditions.

§ 287. One distinction is, between cases where, in default of a compliance with the condition, there is a bequest over, and cases where there is not a bequest over, upon a like default of the party to comply with the condition. In the former case, the bequest over becomes operative upon such default, and defeats the prior legacy.⁴ In the latter case (that is, where there is no bequest

but not where it was to a third person. Ayliffe, Pand. B. 3, tit. 21, p. 374. *Legatum alii sub conditione sic relictum; si uxor nuptui se post mortem mariti non collocaverit, contractis nuptiis, conditione deficit, ideoque peti nequaquam potest.* Cod. Lib. 6, tit. 40, l. 1; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 35, tit. 1, n. 35. In *Parsons v. Winslow* (6 Mass. 169), where the legacy was during widowhood and life, without any bequest over, the court held the condition to be *in terrorem* only; and that the legatee took, notwithstanding a second marriage. See *Hooper v. Dundas*, 10 Barr, 75; *Bennett v. Robinson*, 10 Watts, 348; *The Commonwealth v. Stauffer*, 10 Barr, 350. But see *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Dick. 721, 722; s. c. 2 Brown, Ch. 488; *Harvey v. Aston*, 1 Atk. 379; *Marples v. Bainbridge*, 1 Mad. 590; *Richards v. Baker*, 2 Atk. 321; 1 Roper on Legacies, by White, ch. 13, § 2, p. 721, 722.

¹ *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Bro. Ch. 488; 2 Dick. 721, 722; Godolp. Orp. Leg. Pt. 3, ch. 17, § 1 to 10; Ayliffe, Pand. B. 3, tit. 21, p. 374.

² Dickson, *in re*, 1 Eng. Law & Eq. 149.

³ See *Long v. Dennis*, 4 Burr. 2052. Lord Mansfield, in *Long v. Dennis*, 4 Burr. 2055, said: "Conditions in restraint of marriage are odious, and are, therefore held to the utmost rigor and strictness." Lord Eldon seems to have disapproved of this generality of expression, in *Clarke v. Parker*, 19 Ves. 19.

⁴ *Clarke v. Parker*, 19 Ves. 13; *Lloyd v. Branton*, 3 Meriv. 108, 119: 1

over), the condition is treated as ineffectual, upon the ground that the testator is to be deemed to use the condition *in terrorem* only, and not to impose a forfeiture, since he has failed to make any other disposition of the bequest upon default in the condition.¹

§ 288. Another distinction is taken between conditions in restraint of marriage, annexed to a bequest of personal estate, and the like conditions, annexed to a devise of real estate, or to a charge on real estate, or to things savoring of the realty. In the latter cases (touching real estate) the doctrine of the common law, as to conditions, is strictly applied. If the condition be precedent, it must be strictly complied with, in order to entitle the party to the benefit of the devise or gift. If the condition be subsequent, its validity will depend upon its being such as the law will allow to divest an estate. For, if the law deems the condition void as against its own policy, then the estate will be absolute and free from the condition. If, on the other hand, the condition is good, then a non-compliance with it will defeat the estate, in the same manner as any other condition subsequent will defeat it.²

§ 289. But, if the bequest be of personal estate, a different rule seems to have prevailed, founded, in all probability, upon the doctrines maintained in the ecclesiastical courts, and derived from the canon and civil law.³ If the condition in restraint of mar-

Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10, note (g); *Wheeler v. Bingham*, 3 Atk. 368; *Malcolm v. O'Callaghan*, 2 Mad. 350; *Chauncey v. Graydon*, 2 Atk. 616.

¹ *Harvey v. Aston*, 1 Atk. 361, 375, 377; *Reynish v. Martin*, 3 Atk. 330; 1 *Wilson*, 130; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10, note (g); *Pendarvis v. Hicks*, 2 *Freeman*, 41; *Pullen v. Ready*, 2 Atk. 587; *Long v. Dennis*, 4 *Burr*. 2055; 1 *Eq. Abridg.* 110, C.; *Parsons v. Winslow*, 6 *Mass.* 169; 1 *Roper on Legacies*, by *White*, ch. 13, § 1, p. 654 to 660; *id.* § 2, p. 687, 715 to 727; *Eastland v. Reynolds*, 1 *Dick.* 317. [But see *Dickson, in re*, 1 *Eng. Law & Eq.* 149, as to a bequest over.]

² *Co. Litt.* 206 a and b; *id.* 217 a; *id.* 237, *Harg. & Butler's note* (152); *Bertie v. Faulkland*, 3 *Ch. Cas.* 130; s. c. 2 *Freeman*, 220; 2 *Vern.* 333; 1 *Eq. Cas. Abridg.* 108, margin; *Harvey v. Aston*, *Com.* 726; s. c. 1 *Atk.* 261; *Reynish v. Martin*, 3 *Atk.* 330, 332, 333; *Fry v. Porter*, 1 *Mod.* 300; *Long v. Rickets*, 2 *Sim. & Stu.* 179; *Commonwealth v. Stauffer*, 10 *Barr.* 350; *Popham v. Bamfield*, 1 *Vern.* 83; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 10, note (g); *Graydon v. Hicks*, 2 *Atk.* 16; *Peyton v. Bury*, 2 *P. Will.* 626; 1 *Roper on Legacies*, by *White*, ch. 13, § 1, p. 650, 666; *id.* § 2, p. 687 to 727; *post*, § 290, note (2).

³ 1 *Roper on Legacies*, by *White*, ch. 13, § 1, p. 650 to 660; *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 *Bro. Ch.* 487; 2 *Dick.* 712; *Stackpole v. Beaumont*, 3 *Ves.* 96.

riage be subsequent and general in its character, it is treated as the like condition is at law, in regard to real estate, as a mere nullity, and the legacy becomes pure and absolute.¹ If it be only a limited restraint (such as to a marriage with the consent of parents, or not until the age of twenty-one), and there is no bequest over upon default, the condition subsequent is treated as merely *in terrorem*; and the legacy becomes pure and absolute.² But if the restraint be a condition precedent, then it admits of a very different application from the rule of the common law in similar cases as to real estate. For, if the condition regard real estate, and be in general restraint of marriage, there, although it is void, yet as we have seen, if there is not a compliance with it, the estate will never arise in the devisee. But, if it be a legacy of personal estate, under like circumstances, the legacy will be held good and absolute, as if no condition whatsoever had been annexed to it.

§ 290. Whether the same rule is to be applied to legacies of personal estate upon a condition precedent, not in restraint of marriage generally, but of a limited, and qualified, and legal character, where there is no bequest over, and there has been a default in complying with the condition, has been a question much vexed and discussed in courts of equity, and upon which some diversity of judgment has been expressed. There are, certainly, authorities which go directly to establish the doctrine, that there is no distinction in cases of this sort between conditions precedent and conditions subsequent. In each of them, if there is no bequest over, the legacy is treated as pure and absolute, and the condition is made *in terrorem* only. The civil law and ecclesiastical law recognize no distinction between conditions precedent and conditions subsequent, as to this particular subject.³ On the other hand, there are authorities which seem to inculcate a different doctrine, and to treat conditions precedent, as to legacies of this sort, upon the same footing as any other bequests or devises at the common law; that is to say, that they are to take

¹ See *Morley v. Rennoldson*, 2 Hare, 570.

² *Lloyd v. Branton*, 3 Meriv. 117; *Marples v. Bainbridge*, 1 Mad. 590; 1 *Roper on Legacies*, by White, ch. 13, § 1, p. 654, &c.; *id.* § 2, p. 715, 747; *Garret v. Pritty*, 2 Vern. 293; *Wheeler v. Bingham*, 3 Atk. 364; *Hooper v. Dundas*, 10 Barr, 75.

³ See *Harvey v. Aston*, 1 Atk. 375; s. c. Com. Rep. 738; *Reynish v. Martin*, 3 Atk. 332.

effect only upon the condition precedent being complied with, whether there be a bequest over or not.¹

§ 291. But, whichever of these opinions shall be deemed to maintain the correct doctrine, there is a modification of the strictness of the common law, as to conditions precedent in regard to personal legacies, which is at once rational and convenient, and promotive of the real intention of the testator. It is, that where a literal compliance with the condition becomes impossible from unavoidable circumstances, and without any default of the party, it is sufficient that it is complied with, as nearly as it practically can be, or (as it is technically called) *Cy pres.* This modification is derived from the civil law, and stands upon the presumption, that the donor could not intend to require impossibilities, but only a substantial compliance with his directions, as far as they should admit of being fairly carried into execution. It is upon this ground that courts of equity constantly hold, in cases of personal legacies, that a substantial compliance with the condition satisfies it, although not literally fulfilled. Thus, if a legacy upon a condition precedent should require the consent of three persons to a marriage, and one or more of them should die, the consent of the survivor or survivors would be deemed a sufficient compliance with condition.² And, *à fortiori*, this doctrine would be applied to conditions subsequent.³

¹ The former doctrine (that is, that there is no difference between conditions precedent and conditions subsequent, as to this point) was maintained by Lord Hardwicke, in *Reynish v. Martin*, 3 Atk. 330; and was recognized by Lord Clare, in *Keily v. Monck*, 3 Ridgw. 263, and by Sir Thomas Plumer, in *Malcolm v. O'Callaghan*, 2 Mad. 349, 353. See also *Garbut v. Hilton*, 1 Atk. 381. But the contrary doctrine is indicated in *Hemmings v. Munckley*, 1 Bro. Ch. 303; *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Bro. Ch. 488; 2 Dick. 723, 724; *Stackpole v. Beaumont*, 3 Ves. 89. See also *Knight v. Cameron*, 14 Ves. 388; *Clarke v. Parker*, 19 Ves. 13; *Elton v. Elton*, 1 Ves. 4. Mr. Roper, in his work on *Legacies*, 1 Roper on *Legacies*, by White, ch. 13, § 1, p. 654 to 660; id. § 2, p. 715 to 727, is of opinion that the weight of authority is with the latter doctrine: and so is Mr. Hoven-den in his *Supplement to Vesey, Jr.*, Vol. 1, p. 353, note to 3 Ves. 89. See also Mr. Saunders's note to *Harvey v. Aston*, 1 Atk. 361. A distinction has also been taken between cases of personal legacies and cases of portions charged on land. In the former, the condition may perhaps be dispensed with, at least under some circumstances; in the latter, the condition must be complied with, to entitle the party to take, although there may be no devise over. See *Harvey v. Aston*, 1 Atk. 361; s. c. Com. Rep. 726; Cas. T. Talb. 212.

² Swinburne on *Wills*, Pt. 4, § 7, n. 4, p. 262; 1 Roper on *Legacies*, by White, ch. 13, § 2, p. 691, 692. See *Clarke v. Parker*, 19 Ves. 1, 16, 19.

³ See 1 Roper on *Legacies*, ch. 13, § 2, p. 691; *Peyton v. Bury*, 2 P. Will.

[* § 291 *a*. So also conditions annexed to a gift, the tendency of which is to induce husband and wife to live separate, or be divorced, are, upon grounds of public policy and public morals, held void. In an early case,¹ where the father bequeathed a sum of money to his daughter, "if she would be divorced from her husband," the condition was held void; and although precedent in its character, that, nevertheless, the gift being of personalty took effect. And in another case,² where the testator directed, that if "his niece lived with her husband, his executors should pay her £2 per month, and no more; but if she lived from him, and with her mother, then they should allow her £5 per month"; it was held that the legatee was entitled to the largest sum, without living apart from her husband; and Lord Keeper Henly thought, as the condition was "*contra bonos mores*, the legacy was simple and pure." And, in a recent case,³ where an annuity was bequeathed to a daughter, a married woman, "in case she should be living apart from her husband, and should continue to do so" during the life of the testator's widow; and providing that the annuity should cease whenever the annuitant should cohabit with her husband; and where the will also contained a residuary trust, the income of which was to be paid to the daughter, during such time as she should continue to live apart from her husband; but directed, that, whenever she should cohabit with her husband, such income should be paid to other legatees; the will also containing a trust for children of the daughter, by any other husband; the daughter and her husband living apart, at the date of the will, but being reconciled and living together at the death of the testator and subsequently: it was held that the daughter was entitled to the benefit of all the provisions of the will in her favor. The vice-chancellor, Knight Bruce, said, in giving judgment: "It is impossible to read the will without perceiving that the testator's wish and object were to obstruct a reconciliation, and prevent the wife from living with her husband. And that, by that wish, by that object, its provisions to her were influenced and directed. The weight of authority and the principles of the civil law, as far as I consider them applicable, seem to me to render a decision in this case, in the daughter's

626; *Graydon v. Hicks*, 2 Atk. 16, 18; *Aislabie v. Rice*, 3 Mad. 256; *Worthington v. Evans*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 165.

¹ [* *Tennant v. Braie*, Tothill, 141.

² *Brown v. Peck*, 1 Eden, 140.

³ *Wren v. Bradley*, 2 De G. & Sm. 49.

favor, consistent, at once, with technical equity and moral justice." ¹

§ 291 b. Conditions annexed to devises, both of real and personal estate, to a widow, that they shall become inoperative in the event of the marriage of the devisee, have been generally recognized both in England and America.² It has been attempted, in some American cases, to maintain even that such conditions do not apply to real estate, at common law; and sometimes even, that conditions in restraint of marriage generally are valid, at common law.³ But no such principle is fairly maintainable. There seems no impropriety, however, in allowing the operation of conditions, in restraint of the marriage of widows, in favor of such persons as may have a reasonable interest, either pecuniary or moral, in the question of their marriage. It has accordingly been considered that such conditions, or limitations, whether in regard to the continuance of an estate, in real, or personal, property, were entirely valid.⁴ And the American cases recognize the same right to annex conditions to a gift, in restraint of the marriage of the donee, although not a widow, provided such conditions be not unreasonable, as in the case of an infant, unless with the consent of her guardian.⁵ And a condition subsequent, attached to a bequest of personalty, in restraint of marriage, even in the case of a widow, where no limitation over is provided for, has been held void, as being merely *in terrorem*.⁶ So, also, conditions in general restraint of marriage, whether of males or females, and whether before married or not, are held inoperative, as against sound policy.⁷ We consider that there is no well recognized difference between the case of a widow and others, in this respect, which may be said to

¹ Leading Cases in Equity, Vol. II. 411, 412.

² *Ante*, § 285.

³ Phillips v. Medbury, 7 Conn. 568; Commonwealth v. Stauffer, 10 Penn. St. 350.

⁴ Pringle v. Dunkley, 14 Sm. & M. 16; Hughes v. Boyd, 2 Sneed, 512; Hawkins v. Skeggs, 10 Humph. 31; Collier v. Slaughter, 20 Alabama, 263; Bennett v. Robinson, 10 Watts, 348; McCullough's App. 12 Penn. St. 197; Vance v. Campbell's Heirs, 1 Dana, 229; Holmes v. Field, 12 Illinois, 424.

⁵ Collier v. Slaughter, 20 Ala. 263.

⁶ M'Ilvaine v. Gethen, 3 Wharton, 575; Hoopes v. Dundas, 10 Penn. St. 75; Parsons v. Winslow, 6 Mass. 169.

⁷ Maddox v. Maddox, 11 Grattan, 804; 2 Leading Cases in Eq. 416; Waters v. Tazewell, 9 Md. 291.

rest upon principle. It depends wholly upon the inquiry, whether the condition is reasonable, in itself, under the particular circumstances. There is a recognized difference between real and personal estate, as to the operation of a gift upon condition precedent, which is illegal. In the former case, the estate will not vest, unless the condition be performed, notwithstanding it being against law;¹ but in the latter case, the condition being void, the estate takes effect the same as if it had been absolute.² But it has been held that the compromise of a litigation, between the parties themselves, without the intervention of third parties, is not rendered invalid, in consequence of it being founded upon the consideration of marriage.³

§ 291 *c.* The English cases, and some of the American cases, certainly do argue a substantial difference between the condition which a man may annex to a gift to his widow, and one to any other woman.⁴ The vice-chancellor here says, "The law recognizes in the husband that species of interest in the widowhood of his wife as makes it lawful for him to restrain a second marriage." And it is here laid down, that there is a difference, even in equity, between a *condition* and *limitation*, in a gift to one not married, and that one may give an estate to any woman, to continue so long as she shall remain single; but if he give a life, or other estate, and then append a condition to defeat that estate, if she marries, the condition is not good. Such a distinction may be valid, perhaps, in regard to the creation of estates in the realty; but we question if it could fairly be maintained in courts of equity, in regard to testamentary gifts of real estate; and especially of personality, where the general intent of the donor is more to be regarded, than the precise technical form of the gift. And we apprehend that there is no substantial reason, either in law, or in morals, why a man should be allowed to annex an unreasonable condition, in restraint of marriage, one merely *in terrorem*, in the

¹ Greenleaf's Cruise, Vol. II. 16.

² Maddox v. Maddox, *supra*.

³ Donallen v. Lenox, 6 Dana, 89.

⁴ Lloyd v. Lloyd, 2 Simons, New Series, 255. And in Grace v. Webb, 15 Simons, 384, the same view is maintained. *Ante*, § 291 *b*, n. 2. The construction of the courts is, of late, certainly favorable to the upholding of gifts to women, dependent, in any sense, upon their living apart from their husbands, or remaining unmarried, treating such condition as void. Shewell v. Dwarries, Johnson, Eng. Ch. 172.

case of a wife, more than of a child, or any other person, in regard to whose settlement in life, he might fairly be allowed to take an interest; but the cases, many of them, maintain such distinction.

§ 291 d. The question as to what conditions, affecting marriage, are valid, must depend upon the circumstances of each particular case, and will be very materially affected, by the consideration, how far the condition was one fairly applicable to the relation of the parties, and the peculiar views and situation of the donor and donee. It has been decided, that a condition, in a devise, that if the devisee "shall marry, contrary to the order and established rules of the people called Quakers, such devise should cease, as to him, and his issue, and be void," is valid and legal.¹ So it is a legal condition which avoids the gift, provided the donee marry a Scotchman,² or a papist;³ and many others, some of which have already been referred to. But where the father gave a legacy to his daughter, "during her separation from her husband," she then living separate from him, but being reconciled and living with him at the father's death, it was held a legal condition, and that the legatee took nothing under the will, and the voluntary separation subsequent to the death of the testator would not entitle her to it.⁴ And it was held in a recent English case, that where a father revoked the provision in his will, on condition that his daughter became a nun, it was held a legal condition, and that the provision ceased on her becoming a nun, although there was no bequest over.⁵

§ 291 e. This whole subject, as to what conditions in restraint of marriage shall be regarded, merely *in terrorem*, and so void, and what ones are valid, is certainly, both in England and this country, involved in great uncertainty and confusion. In the case of Dickson's Trust,⁶ Lord Cranworth repudiates the existence of any such

¹ *Haughton v. Haughton*, 1 Molloy, 612. Lord Manners, chancellor, here said, with some justice perhaps: "The only point on which I feel the least hesitation is this, whether the court ought not to consider a condition, which in effect forbids marriage with any member of the established Church, as contrary to public policy."

² *Perrin v. Lyon*, 9 East, 170.

³ *Duggan v. Kelly*, 10 Ir. Eq. 295; 1 Eq. Ca. Ab. 110, pl. 2.

⁴ *Cooper v. Remsen*, 5 Johns. Ch. 459.

⁵ In the matter of *Dickson's Trust*, 1 Simons, n. s. 37.

⁶ 1 Simons, n. s. 37.]

rule of law, as that conditions, where there is no bequest over, are to be held inoperative, as a mere idle threat, *in terrorem*. And this experienced equity judge here gives utterance to an opinion, which could scarcely fail to strike all minds, which have examined the cases upon the point, as eminently just. He says: "It is impossible to refer to the numerous cases on this subject, without feeling that the judges, in deciding them, have never felt very sure of the ground upon which they were treading." Certain general rules may be safely affirmed to exist. As that all such conditions, which are unreasonable, either on account of the donor having no recognized right to interest himself in the marriage of the donee; or because he goes beyond the just limits of a right which does exist to a certain extent; or because he attempts to exercise his control, in an improper manner, or to an improper extent, are void. Beyond this the cases seem to finally resolve themselves into the mere judgment of the court upon the circumstances of each particular case.]

§ 292. Another class of constructive frauds, and so deemed, because inconsistent with the general policy of the law, is that of bargains and contracts made in restraint of trade. And here, the known and established distinction is between such bargains and contracts as are in general restraint of trade, and such as are in restraint of it only as to particular places or persons. The latter, if founded upon a good and valuable consideration, are valid. The former are universally prohibited. The reason of this difference is, that all general restraints upon trade have a tendency to promote monopolies, and to discourage industry, enterprise, and just competition, and thus to do mischief to the party, by the loss of his livelihood and the subsistence of his family, and mischief to the public, by depriving it of the services and labors of a useful member.¹ [And an association of carriers or forwarders, to regulate the price of freight and passage by a uniform scale, to be fixed by themselves, and agreeing to divide the profits with each other, with provisions prohibiting the members from engaging in similar business out of the association, has been thought to be within the mischief of contracts in general restraint of trade.² And as tend-

¹ *Mitchel v. Reynolds*, 1 P. Will. 181, where the subject is most elaborately considered. See also *Pierce v. Fuller*, 8 Mass. 223; *Morris v. Colman*, 18 Ves. 436; *Alger v. Thacher*, 19 Pick. 51; *Lawrence v. Kidder*, 10 Barb. 653.

² *Stanton v. Allen*, 5 Denio, 434.

ing to restrain trade, and therefore void, are combinations among workmen and employers to demand or to pay only certain prices for labor, with a penalty to each other upon breach of the agreement so made.¹] But the same reasoning does not apply to a special restraint, not to carry on trade in a particular place, or with particular persons, or for a limited reasonable time; for this restraint leaves all other places, and persons, and times free to the party, to pursue his trade and employment.² And it may even be beneficial to the country, that a particular place should not be overstocked with artisans or other persons, engaged in a particular trade or business;³ or a particular trade may be promoted by being for a short period limited to a few persons; especially if it be a foreign trade recently discovered, and it can be beneficial but to a small number of adventurers.⁴ And, for a like reason, a person may lawfully sell a secret in his trade or business, and restrain himself from using that secret.⁵

[* § 292 a. The question how far contracts, operating upon the course of trade, may be upheld by courts of equity, is very judiciously discussed by Woodward, J., in *Keeler v. Taylor*.⁶ The rule here declared is that such contracts must be founded upon valuable consideration and impose no general restraint upon trade and industry; and courts of equity will not enforce such contracts, although good at law, if their terms be at all hard, or even complex.]

§ 293. Upon analogous principles, agreements, whereby parties engage not to bid against each other at a public auction, especially

¹ *Hilton v. Eckersley*, 32 Eng. Law & Eq. 198; 34 id. 224.

² See *Tainter v. Ferguson*, 7 Com. B. Rep. 716; *Hartley v. Cummings*, 5 id. 247; *Mallan v. May*, 11 M. & W. 653; *Hastings v. Whitley*, 2 Exch. 611; *Nichols v. Stratton*, 10 Q. B. Rep. 346; *Lange v. Work*, 2 Ohio St. 519; *Green v. Price*, 13 M. & W. 698; *Tallis v. Tallis*, 18 Eng. Law & Eq. 162; *Rannie v. Irving*, 7 Mann. & Gr. 976.

³ *Ibid.*; *Davis v. Mason*, 5 T. R. 118; *Chesman v. Nainby*, 3 Bro. Parl. Cas. 349; *Shackle v. Baker*, 14 Ves. 468; *Cruttwell v. Lye*, 17 Ves. 336; *Harrison v. Gardner*, 2 Mad. 198; *Pierce v. Fuller*, 8 Mass. 223; *Perkins v. Lyman*, 9 Mass. 522; *Stearns v. Barrett*, 1 Pick. 443; *Palmer v. Stebbins*, 3 Pick. 188; *Pierce v. Woodward*, 6 Pick. 206.

⁴ *Perkins v. Lyman*, 9 Mass. 522, 530.

⁵ *Bryson v. Whitehead*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 74; *Vickery v. Welch*, 19 Pick. 523. [* See also *Benwell v. Inns*, 24 Beavan, 307; *Edmonds v. Plews*, 6 Jur. n. s. 1091.

⁶ 53 Penn. St. 467.]

in cases where such auctions are directed or required by law, as in cases of sales of chattels or other property on execution, are held void; for they are unconscientious, and against public policy, and have a tendency injuriously to affect the character and value of sales at public auction, and to mislead private confidence. They operate virtually as a fraud upon the sale.¹ So, if underbidders or puffers are employed at an auction to enhance the price² and deceive other bidders, and they are, in fact, misled,³ the sale will be held void, as against public policy.⁴

§ 293 *a*. So, where contracts are entered into between parties pending a bill in parliament for the charter of a corporation for a private purpose (as, for example, a railway), and the agreement is to be concealed from parliament, in order to procure the bill to be passed without the knowledge thereof, and thereby to produce a false impression, or to mislead or suppress inquiry, or to withdraw public opposition thereto on grounds of public or private general interest, such contracts will be held void as a constructive fraud upon parliament, as well as upon the public at large.⁵

[§ 293 *b*. So, in America, a contract to procure the passage of an act of the legislature, by any sinister means, or by using personal

¹ *Jones v. Caswell*, 3 Johns. Cas. 29; *Doolin v. Ward*, 6 Johns. 194; *Wilbur v. Howe*, 8 Johns. 444; *Gardiner v. Morse*, 25 Maine, 140; *Brisbane v. Adams*, 3 Comst. 130; *Hamilton v. Hamilton*, 2 Rich. Eq. 355; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 4, note (x).

² [But not if the object be not to enhance the price, but *bonâ fide* to prevent a sacrifice of the property offered for sale, or any honest and reasonable purpose. *Phippen v. Stickney*, 3 Met. 387, and cases cited. See *Veasie v. Williams*, 3 Story, 622.]

³ See *Tomlinson v. Savage*, 6 Iredell, Eq. 430; *id.* 278; *Veazie v. Williams*, 8 How. U. S. 134; *Latham v. Morrow*, 6 B. Monroe, 630.

⁴ See *Howard v. Castle*, 6 T. R. 642; *Bramley v. Alt*, 3 Ves. 619, 623, 624; *Connolly v. Parsons*, *id.* 624, note; *Smith v. Clark*, 12 Ves. 477. But see *Bexwell v. Christie*, Cowp. 395; *Twining v. Morrice*, 2 Bro. Ch. 326; 1 *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 257; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 1, p. 390; 2 *Kent. Comm. Lect.* 39, p. 537, 538 (5th edit.); *Steele v. Ellmaker*, 11 *Serg. & Rawle*, 86. [And where property is advertised to be sold "without reserve," such advertisement is understood to exclude any interference by the vendor, either direct or indirect, which can, under any possible circumstances, affect the right of the highest bidder whatever may be the amount of his bidding, to be declared the purchaser. *Robinson v. Wall*, 2 *Phillips*, Ch. 372.]

⁵ *Lord Howden v. Simpson*, 10 *Adolph. & Ell.* 793; *Simpson v. Lord Howden*, 1 *Keen*, 583; s. c. 3 *Mylne & Craig*, 97; *The Vauxhall Bridge Co. v. Earl Spencer*, 2 *Mad.* 356; s. c. *Jac.* 64.

influence with the members, is void, as being inconsistent with public policy and the integrity of our political institutions.¹ So, a contract founded on an agreement to procure signatures and obtain a pardon for a criminal, of the governor, is illegal;² although it may be otherwise if the party is expressly limited to the proper use of proper means to obtain the signatures.³ So, a contract to abandon the prosecution of a petition presented to the House of Commons, against the return of a member accused of bribery, is illegal.⁴ So, where a city charter prohibited any member of the council from being interested in any contract, payment for which was to be made by vote of such council, and a member by a secret arrangement with a contractor became interested in such a contract, a note given by such contractor to the member for his share of the profits is wholly void, even in the hands of an innocent assignee.⁵]

[* § 293 c. This general question is one of very great extent, in regard to which it would be impracticable to examine the cases in detail. The subject is very extensively discussed in another place, to which we must content ourselves by here referring.⁶ It is perhaps proper to say that the secrecy with which such matters are conducted, and the consequent liability to impose upon the legislature, is by no means the chief source of evil in such contracts. The main thing to be dreaded is the almost certainty that such contracts, if allowed to affect the proceedings of the legislature or the courts, however purely intended, will be liable to pervert the natural and orderly course in which such matters should be conducted. The English courts adhered, for a long time, with great firmness, to the rule laid down in *Lord Howden v. Simpson*.⁷ And this case, although in fact reversed in the Exchequer Chamber, and that judgment affirmed in the House of

¹ *Clippinger v. Hepbaugh*, 5 Watts & Serg. 315; *Wood v. McCann*, 6 Dana, 366; *Pingry v. Washburn*, 1 Aikens, 264; *Edwards v. Grand Junction Railway Co.*, 1 Mylne & Craig, 650; *Hall v. Dyson*, 10 Eng. Law & Eq. 424; *Marshall v. Baltimore and Ohio Railroad*, 16 Howard, 314; *Smith v. Applegate*, 3 Zab. 352.

² *Hatfeld v. Gulden*, 7 Watts, 152.

³ *Formby v. Pryor*, 15 Geo. 258.

⁴ *Coppock v. Bower*, 4 M. & W. 361.

⁵ *Bell v. Quinn*, 2 Sandf. 146.

⁶ [* 2 *Redfield on Railw.* §§ 234, 235, and cases referred to in the notes.

⁷ 10 Ad. & Ellis, 793.

Lords,¹ and chiefly upon the ground that the plaintiff was not bound to communicate to the legislature the bargain he had made with the company, seems finally to have prevailed, as most common-sense decisions do, when opposed to merely technical views.²]

§ 294. In like manner, agreements, which are founded upon violations of public trust or confidence, or of the rules adopted by courts in furtherance of the administration of public justice, are held void. Thus, an agreement made for a remuneration to commissioners, appointed to take testimony, and bound to secrecy by the nature of their appointment, upon their disclosure of the testimony so taken, is void.³ [So, an agreement by a party to a suit to pay a witness a certain sum for his attendance, and more if the party promising succeeded in the suit, is void.⁴ So an agreement to pay a board of public officers, for their personal benefit, a certain sum for doing an act in their official duty.⁵ So, a contract by a deputy sheriff to pay the sheriff a certain sum as the price of his appointment as such deputy.⁶] So, an assignment of the half-pay of a retired officer of the army is void; for it operates as a fraud upon the public bounty.⁷ So, an assignment of the fees and profits of the office of keeping a house of correction and of the profits of the tap-house connected with it, is void; for the former plainly tends to oppression and extortion, and the latter to increase riot and debauchery among the prisoners.⁸ Agreements, founded upon the suppression of criminal prosecutions, fall under the same consideration. They have a manifest tendency to subvert public justice.⁹ So, wager contracts, which are contrary to sound morals,

¹ Railw. Cases, Vol. III. 294.

² 1 Redfield on Railw. § 16, and cases cited and reviewed in the notes. *Caledonian & Dumbartonshire Railway Co. v. Helensburgh Harbor Trustees*, 2 Macq. H. L. Cases, 391; 39 Eng. Law & Eq. 28; Ed. P. & D. *Railway v. Philip*, id. 41.]

³ *Cooth v. Jackson*, 6 Ves. 12, 31, 32, 35.

⁴ *Dawkins v. Gill*, 10 Ala. 206.

⁵ *Odineal v. Barry*, 24 Miss. 9.

⁶ *Ferris v. Adams*, 23 Verm. 136.

⁷ *Stone v. Liddledale*, 2 Anst. 533; *McCarthy v. Goold*, 1 Ball & Beatty, 389. See *Davis v. Duke of Marlborough*, 1 Swanst. 74, 79; *Osborne v. Williams*, 18 Ves. 379. [*Contra* as to the difference received by an officer upon retiring from full pay, and going upon half pay. *Price v. Lovett*, 4 Eng. Law & Eq. 110.]

⁸ *Methwold v. Walbank*, 2 Ves. 238.

⁹ *Johnson v. Ogilby*, 3 P. Will. 276, and Cox's note (1); *Keir v. Leeman*, 9 Ad. & El. n. s. 371; 2 Lead. Crim. Cas. 258 and note. *Newland on Contr.* ch. 8, p. 158; *Shaw v. Reed*, 30 Maine, 105.

or injurious to the feelings or interests of third persons, or against the principles of public policy or duty, are void.¹ So, of contracts to enable a person to violate the license laws.² So are contracts which have a tendency to encourage champerty.³

§ 295. Another extensive class of cases, falling under this head of constructive fraud, respects contracts for the buying, selling, or procuring of public offices. It is obvious that all such contracts must have a material influence to diminish the respectability, responsibility, and purity of public officers, and to introduce a system of official patronage, corruption, and deceit wholly at war with the public interests.⁴ The confidence of officers may thereby not only be abused and perverted to the worst purposes; but mischievous arrangements may be made to the injury of the public; and persons may be introduced or kept in office who are utterly unqualified to discharge the proper functions of their stations.⁵ Such contracts are justly deemed contracts of moral turpitude;⁶ and are calculated to betray the public interests into the administration of the weak, the profligate, the selfish, and the cunning. They are, therefore, held utterly void, as contrary to the soundest public policy; and, indeed, as a constructive fraud upon the government.⁷ It is acting against the spirit of the constitution of a free government, by which it ought to be served by fit and able persons, recommended by the proper officers of the government for their abilities, and from motives of disinterested purity.⁸ It has

¹ *De Costa v. Jones*, Cowp. 729; *Atherfold v. Beard*, 2 T. Rep. 610; *Gilbert v. Sykes*, 16 East, 150; *Hartley v. Rice*, 10 East, 22; *Allen v. Hearn*, 1 T. Rep. 56; *Shirley v. Sankey*, 2 Bos. & Pull. 130. See *Doolubdass v. Ramloil*, 3 Eng. Law & Eq. 39; *Ramboll v. Soojumnull*, 6 Moore, P. C. 300.

² *Ritchie v. Smith*, 6 C. B. 462.

³ *Powell v. Knowler*, 2 Atk. 224.

⁴ 1 Fowl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 4, note (u); *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 1 Atk. 352; s. c. 2 Ves. 124, 156; *Boynton v. Hubbard*, 7 Mass. 119; *Hartwell v. Hartwell*, 4 Ves. 811, 815.

⁵ *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 135, 136; s. c. 1 Atk. 352; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 33, p. 477 to 482.

⁶ *Morris v. McCulloch*, 2 Eden, 190; s. c. *Ambler*, 435; *Law v. Law*, 3 P. Will. 391; s. c. *Cas. T. Talb.* 140; *Harrington v. Du Chastel*, 2 Swanst. 167, note; s. c. 1 Bro. Ch. 124.

⁷ *Bellamy v. Burrow*, *Cas. T. Talb.* 97; *Harrington v. Du Chastel*, 1 Bro. Ch. 124; s. c. 2 Swanst. 167, note; *Garforth v. Fearon*, 1 H. Black. 327, 329; *Palmer v. Bate*, 6 Moore, 28; s. c. 2 Bro. & Bing. 673; *Waldo v. Martin*, 4 B. & Cressw. 319; *Parsons v. Thompson*, 1 H. Black. 322, 326.

⁸ *Morris v. McCulloch*, 2 Eden, 190; s. c. *Ambler*, 432, 435; *Ive v. Ash*,

been strongly remarked that there is no rule better established (it should be added, in law and reason, for, unfortunately, it is often otherwise in practice), respecting the disposition of every office, in which the public are concerned, than this, *detur digniori*. On principles of public policy, no money consideration ought to influence the appointment to such offices.¹ It was observed of old, that the sale of offices accomplished the ruin of the Roman Republic. "Nullâ aliâ re magis Romana Respublica interiit, quam quod magistratûs officia venalia erant."²

§ 296. Another class of agreements, which are held to be void on account of their being against public policy, are such as are founded upon corrupt considerations, or moral turpitude, whether they stand prohibited by statute or not; for these are treated as frauds upon the public or moral law.³ The rule of the civil law on this subject speaks but the language of universal justice. "Pacta, quæ contra leges constitutionesque, vel contra bonos mores fiunt, nullam vim habere, indubitati juris est."⁴ It is but applying a preventive check, by withholding every encouragement from wrong, and aiming thereby to enforce the obligations of virtue. For, although the law, as a science, must necessarily leave many moral precepts without due enforcement, as rules of imperfect obligation only, it is most studious not thereby to lend the slightest countenance to the violations of such precepts. Wherever the divine law, or the positive law, or the common law prohibits the doing of certain acts, or enjoins the discharge of certain duties, any agreement to do such acts, or not to discharge such duties, is against the dearest interests of society, and, therefore, is held void; for, otherwise, the law would be open to the just reproach of winking at crimes and omissions, or tolerating, in one form, what it affected to reprobate in another.⁵ Hence, all agreements, bonds, and securities, given as a price for future [and all agreements not under seal to pay for past⁶] illicit intercourse⁷ (*præ-*
Prec. Ch. 199; Co. Litt. 234 a; East India Company v. Neave, 5 Ves. 173, 181, 184; Hartwell v. Hartwell, 4 Ves. 811.

¹ Lord Kenyon in *Blachford v. Preston*, 8 T. Rep. 92; *Newland on Contracts*, 478.

² Cited Co. Litt. 234 a.

³ *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 32, p. 469, &c.; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 5.

⁴ Cod. Lib. 2, tit. 3, l. 6.

⁵ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, ch. 4, § 4, and notes (s), (y).

⁶ *Beaumont v. Reeve*, 8 Q. B. Rep. 483.

⁷ See *Sherman v. Barrett*, 1 McMull. Ex. 147.

mium pudoris), or for the commission of a public crime, or for the violation of a public law, or for the omission of a public duty,¹ are deemed incapable of confirmation or enforcement upon the maxim, *Ex turpi contractu non oritur actio*.²

§ 296 *a*. But where a party to an illegal or immoral contract comes himself to be relieved from that contract or its obligations, he must distinctly and exclusively state such grounds of relief as the court can legally attend to; and he must not accompany his claim to relief, which may be legitimate, with other claims and complaints, which are contaminated with the original immoral purpose; for if he sets up as a ground of relief the non-fulfilment of the illegal contract on the other side, and thereby that he is released from his obligation to perform it, that shows that he still relies upon the immoral contract and its terms for relief, and therefore the court will refuse it.³

§ 297. Other cases might be put to illustrate the doctrine of courts of equity, in setting aside the agreements and acts in fraud of the policy of the law. Thus, if a devise is made upon a secret trust for charity, in evasion of the statutes of mortmain, it will be set aside.⁴ So, if a parent grant an annuity to his son to qualify him to kill game, he will not be permitted, by tearing off the seal, to avoid the conveyance.⁵ So, if a person convey an estate to another to qualify him to sit in parliament, or to become a voter, he will not be permitted to avoid it, upon the ground of its having been done by him in fraud of the law, and upon a secret agreement that it shall be given up.⁶ So, conveyances made of estates in

¹ [That is, as to future neglect, but not to *past*. A contract to indemnify an officer for past neglect of duty is not illegal. *Hall v. Huntoon*, 17 Verm. 244.]

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 4, and notes (*s*), (*y*); *Walker v. Perkins*, 3 Burr. 1568; *Franco v. Bolton*, 3 Ves. 370; *Benyon v. Nettlefold*, 2 Eng. Law & Eq. 113; *Clarke v. Periam*, 2 Atk. 333, 337; *Whaley v. Norton*, 1 Vern. 483; *Robinson v. Gee*, 1 Ves. 251, 254; *Gray v. Mathias*, 5 Ves. 286; *Ottley v. Browne*, 1 Ball & Beatt. 360; *Battersby v. Smith*, 3 Mad. 110; *Thompson v. Thompson*, 7 Ves. 470; *St. John v. St. John*, 11 Ves. 535, 536. But see *Spear v. Hayward*, Prec. Ch. 114.

³ *Bates v. Chester*, 5 Beavan, 103.

⁴ *Strickland v. Aldridge*, 9 Ves. 516; *Muckleston v. Brown*, 6 Ves. 52.

⁵ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 242; *Curtis v. Perry*, 6 Ves. 747; *Birch v. Blaggrave*, *Ambler*, 264, 265.

⁶ See the *Duke of Bedford v. Coke*, 2 Ves. 116, 117; 3 P. Will. 233; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 243.

trust, in order to secure the party from forfeitures for treason or felony, will be set aside against the crown; but they will be good against the party. So, contracts affecting public elections are held void; so are assignments of rights or property, *pendente lite*, when they amount to, or partake of, the character of maintenance of champerty, and are reprehended by the law.¹

§ 298. And here it may be well to take notice of a distinction often, but not universally, acted on in courts of equity as to the nature and extent of the relief, which will be granted to persons who are parties to agreements or other transactions against public policy, and therefore, are to be deemed *participes criminis*. In general (for it is not universally true),² where parties are concerned in illegal agreements or other transactions, whether they are *mala prohibita* or *mala in se*, courts of equity, following the rule of law, as to participators in a common crime,³ will not at present interpose to grant any relief;⁴ acting upon the known maxim, *In pari delictu potior est conditio defendentis, et possidentis*.⁵ But in cases where the agreements or other transactions

¹ Wallis v. Duke of Portland, 3 Ves. 494; Stevens v. Bagwell, 15 Ves. 139; Strachan v. Brandon, 1 Eden, 303; cited 18 Ves. 127, 128.

² The relief granted in courts of equity, in cases of usury, constitutes an exception. Smith v. Bromley, Doug. 695, note; id. 697, 698. In this case Lord Mansfield said: "If the act is in itself immoral, or a violation of the general laws of public policy, there the party paying shall not have this action [to recover back the money]; for, where both parties are equally criminal against such general laws, the rule is *Potior est conditio defendentis*. But there are other laws which are calculated for the protection of the subject against oppression, extortion, deceit, &c. If such laws are violated, and the defendant takes advantage of the plaintiff's condition or situation, there the plaintiff shall recover. And it is astonishing that the Reports do not distinguish between the violation of the one sort and the other." Id. p. 697; Astley v. Reynolds, 2 Str. 915. See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 13, and note (r); 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 241, 242; Browning v. Morris, Cowp. 790.

³ Buller, N. P. 131, 132; Harrington v. Bigelow, 11 Paige, 349.

⁴ See Logan v. Gigley, 11 Geo. 246; Jones v. Gowan, 7 Iredell, Eq. 21; Galt v. Jackson, 9 Geo. 151.

⁵ See Bromley v. Smith, Doug. 697, note; id. 698; Vandyck v. Hewitt, 1 East, 96; Hanson v. Hancock, 8 T. R. 575; Browning v. Morris, Cowp. 790; Osborne v. Williams, 18 Ves. 379; Buller, N. P. 131, 132; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 4, note (y); Bosanquet v. Dashwood, Cas. T. Talb. 37, 40, 41. I say, *at present*; for there has been considerable fluctuation of opinion, both in courts of law and equity on this subject. The old cases often gave relief, both at law and in equity, where the party would otherwise derive an advantage from his iniquity. But the modern doctrine has adopted a more severely just, and proba-

are repudiated on account of their being against public policy, the circumstance, that the relief is asked by a party who is *particeps criminis*, is not in equity material. The reason is, that the public interest requires that relief should be given; and it is given to the public through the party.¹ And in these cases relief will be granted not only by setting aside the agreement or other transaction, but, also, in many cases, by ordering a repayment of any money paid under it.² Lord Thurlow, indeed, seems to have

bly politic and moral rule, which is, to leave the parties where it finds them, giving no relief and no countenance to claims of this sort. See the cases at law, *Tomkins v. Bernet*, 1 Salk. 22; *Bromley v. Smith*, Doug. 695, note; *Collins v. Blantern*, 2 Wills. 347; *Lowry v. Aurdieu*, Doug. 468; *Marak v. Abel*, 3 Bos. & Pull. 35; *Vandyck v. Hewitt*, 1 East, 96; *Lubbock v. Potts*, 7 East, 449, 456; *Browning v. Morris*, Cowp. 750; *Hanson v. Hancock*, 8 T. R. 575; *McCullum v. Gourlay*, 8 Johns. 113; *Buller, N. P.* 181; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 4, and note (y); *Buller, N. P.* 131, 132; *Inhab. of Worcester v. Eaton*, 11 Mass. 368, 376, 377; *Phelps v. Decker*, 10 Mass. 267, 274. And in equity, see the cases of *Neville v. Wilkinson*, 1 Bro. Ch. 543, 547, 548; *Jacob*, 67; *Watts v. Brooks*, 3 Ves. Jr. 612; *East India Company v. Neave*, 5 Ves. 173, 181, 184; *Thompson v. Thompson*, 7 Ves. 469; *Knowles v. Haughton*, 11 Ves. 168; *St. John v. St. John*, 11 Ves. 535, 536; *Osborne v. Williams*, 18 Ves. 379; *Bosanquet v. Dashwood*, Cas. T. Talb. 37; *Rider v. Kidder*, 10 Ves. 366; *Rawdon v. Shadwell*, Ambler, 269, and Mr. Blunt's notes. In the case of *Phelps v. Decker* (10 Mass. 274), it was broadly laid down that "by the common law, deeds of conveyance, or other deeds, made contrary to the provisions of a general statute, or for an unlawful consideration, or to carry into effect a contract unlawful in itself, or in consequence of any prohibitory statute, are void *ab initio*, and may be avoided by plea; or on the general issue, *non est factum*, the illegality may be given in evidence." But, in a later case, the doctrine was qualified; and the court took the distinction between bonds and contracts, sought to be enforced, and actual conveyances of lands or other property. The former might be avoided; the latter were treated as actual transfers, and governed by the same rule as the payment of money, or the delivery of a personal chattel. *Inhabitants of Worcester v. Eaton*, 11 Mass. 375 to 379.

¹ *St. John v. St. John*, 11 Ves. 535, 536; *Bromley v. Smith*, Doug. 695, 697, 698; *Hatch v. Hatch*, 9 Ves. 292, 298; *Roberts v. Roberts*, 3 P. Will. 66, 74, and note (1); *Browning v. Morris*, Cowp. 790; *Morris v. McCulloch*, 2 Eden, 190, and note id. 193.

² See *Goldsmith v. Bruning*, 1 Eq. Abridg. Bonds, &c. F. 4, p. 89; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 13, and note; *Smith v. Bruning*, 2 Vern. 392; *Morris v. McCulloch*, Ambler, 432; s. c. 2 Eden, 180. Money paid will not in all cases be ordered to be paid back. For instance, a bond, given for future illicit intercourse, will be decreed to be set aside; but money paid under the bond will not, under all circumstances, be directed to be repaid. See Newland on Contracts, ch. 33, p. 483 to 492; *Hill v. Spencer*, Ambler, 641, and id. App. 836. (Blunt's

thought, that in all cases where money had been paid for an illegal purpose, it might be recovered back, observing, that if courts of justice mean to prevent the perpetration of crimes, it must be, not by allowing a man who has got possession to remain in possession, but by putting the parties back to the state in which they were before.¹ But this is pushing the doctrine to an extravagant extent, and effectually subverting the maxim, *In pari delictu potior est conditio defendentis*. The ground of reasoning, upon which his lordship proceeded, is exceedingly questionable in itself; and the suppression of illegal contracts is far more likely, in general, to be accomplished by leaving the parties without remedy against each other, and by thus introducing a preventive check, naturally connected with a want of confidence, and a sole reliance upon personal honor. And so, accordingly, the modern doctrine is established.² Relief is not granted where both parties are truly *in pari delicto*, unless in cases where public policy would thereby be promoted.³

§ 299. Even in cases of a *præmium pudicitia*, the distinction has been constantly maintained between bills for restraining the woman from enforcing the security given,⁴ and bills for compelling her to give up property already in her possession under the contract. At least, there is no case to be found, where the contrary doctrine has been acted on, except where creditors were concerned. And in this respect the English law seems to have had a steady regard to the policy of the Roman jurisprudence.⁵

edition); *Nye v. Moseley*, 6 B. & Cressw. 133; Dig. Lib. 12, tit. 5, l. 4, § 3. See also cases of gaming before the statute, in *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 137, 138. See also *Inhabitants of Worcester v. Eaton*, 11 Mass. 376, 377.

¹ *Neville v. Wilkinson*, 1 Bro. Ch. 547, 548; 18 Ves. 382.

² See *Sharp v. Taylor*, 2 Phillips, Ch. 801.

³ See the remarks of Lord Eldon in *Rider v. Kidder*, 10 Ves. 366; *Smith v. Bromley*, Doug. 696, note. See also *Adams v. Barrett*, 6 Georgia, 404.

⁴ See *Weakley v. Warkins*, 7 Humph. 356.

⁵ *Rider v. Kidder*, 10 Ves. 366. The Roman law has stated some doctrines and distinctions upon this subject, which are worthy of consideration. I shall quote them without commenting upon them. They are partially cited in 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 4, note (y). Three cases are put. (1.) Where the turpitude is on the part of the receiver only; and there the rule is, *Quod si turpis causa accipientis fuerit, etiamsi res secuta sit, repeti potest*. Dig. Lib. 12, tit. 5, l. 1, § 2. (2.) Where the turpitude is on the part of the giver alone; and there the rule is the contrary. *Cessat quidem conditio, quum turpiter datur*. Pothier, Pand. Lib. 12, tit. 5, art. 8. (3.) Where the turpitude affects both parties; and there the rule is, *Ubi autem et dantis et accipientis turpitude versatur, non posse*

§ 300. And, indeed, in cases, where both parties are *in delicto*, concurring in an illegal act, it does not always follow, that they stand *in pari delicto*; for there may be, and often are, very different degrees in their guilt.¹ One party may act under circumstances of oppression, imposition, hardship, undue influence, or great inequality of condition or age; so that his guilt may be far less in degree than that of his associate in the offence.² And, besides, there may be, on the part of the court itself, a necessity of supporting the public interests or public policy, in many cases, however reprehensible the acts of the parties may be.³

[* § 300 a. Thus, in a very recent case,⁴ where the daughter concurred with her father in a covenant to surrender copyholds by way of mortgage, to one who loaned a sum of money to the father; part of the consideration being the permission of the father for the mortgagee to continue his visits to the daughter, whom he

repeti dicimus; veluti, si pecunia detur, ut male judicetur. Dig. Lib. 12, tit. 5, l. 3; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 12, tit. 5, n. 7. The reason given is: *In pari causa possessor potior haberi debet.* Dig. Lib. 50, tit. 17, l. 128; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 12, tit. 5, n. 7. Several other examples are given under this head. *Idem, si ob stuprum datum sit; vel si quis, in adulterio deprehensus, redemerit se, cessat enim repetitio.* Item, *si dederit fur, ne proderetur; quoniam utriusque turpitudine versatur, cessat repetitio.* Dig. Lib. 12, tit. 5, l. 4; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 12, tit. 5, n. 7. *Cum te propter turpem causam contra disciplinam temporum meorum, domum adversariæ dedisse profitearis; frustra eam tibi restitui desideras; cum in pari causa possessoris conditio melior habeatur.* Cod. Lib. 4, tit. 7, l. 2; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 12, tit. 5, l. 7. *Sed quod meretrici datur, repeti non potest. Sed nova ratione, non ea, quod utriusque turpitudine versatur, sed solius dantis; a new reason, which Pothier, as well as Ulpian, seems to doubt.* See Dig. Lib. 12, tit. 5, l. 4, § 3; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 12, tit. 5, n. 7, and note (6). On the other hand, when the money had not been paid, or the contract fulfilled, the Roman law deemed the contract void. *Quamvis enim utriusque turpitudine versatur, ac solutæ quantitatis cessat repetitio, tamen ex hujusmodi stipulatione, contra bonos mores interposita, denegandas esse actiones juris auctoritate demonstratur.* Cod. Lib. 4, tit. 7, l. 5; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 12, tit. 5, n. 9.

¹ *Smith v. Bromley*, Doug. 696; *Browning v. Morris*, Cowp. 790; *Osborne v. Williams*, 18 Ves. 379; *Phalen v. Clark*, 19 Conn. 421.

² *Bosanquet v. Dashwood*, Cas. T. Talb. 37, 40, 41; *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 156, 157; *Osborne v. Williams*, 18 Ves. 379; [* *Pinckston v. Brown*, 3 Jones, Eq. 494.]

³ See *Woodhouse v. Meredith*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 224, 225; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 4, note (y); *Bosanquet v. Dashwood*, Cas. T. Talb. 37, 40, 41; *Smith v. Bromley*, Doug. 696, note; *Browning v. Morris*, Cowp. 790; *Morris v. McCulloch*, 2 Eden, 190, and note 193.

⁴ [* *W—— v. B——*, 32 Beav. 574.]

was seducing or had seduced ; upon bill and cross-bill to enforce and to set aside the contract, the court at first considered, that it could not interfere for either party, but ultimately ordered the deed to be cancelled, and that the grantee should pay the costs of both suits.

§ 300 *b*. And where one, being deserted by his wife, and not having heard of her for two years, supposed her to be dead and married another ; but subsequently learning that his first wife was alive, and supposing himself liable to be prosecuted for bigamy, conveyed his land to another, with the understanding that the grantee would hold it for his use ; and after the grantor, remaining in possession four years and paying off a mortgage upon the premises, the grantee refused to reconvey ; the court held the transaction not illegal, and that the grantor was entitled to a reconveyance both on the ground of a resulting trust in his favor, and the fraud of the grantee.¹ An agreement executed under threat of prosecuting the plaintiff's son for forgery was ordered to be delivered up to be cancelled.²]

§ 301. In cases of usury, this distinction has been adopted by courts of equity. All such contracts being declared void by the statute against usury, courts of equity will follow the law in the construction of the statute. If, therefore, the usurer or lender come into a court of equity, seeking to enforce the contract, the court will refuse any assistance, and repudiate the contract.³ But, on the other hand, if the borrower comes into a court of equity, seeking relief against the usurious contract, the only terms upon which the court will interfere, are, that the plaintiff will pay the defendant what is really and *bonâ fide* due to him, deducting the usurious interest,⁴ and, if the plaintiff do not make such offer in his bill, the defendant may demur to it, and the bill will be dismissed.⁵ The ground of this distinction is, that a court of equity is not positively bound to interfere in such cases

¹ *Davies v. Otty*, 12 Law T. N. s. 789 ; s. c. 13 W. R. 484.

² *Bayley v. Williams*, 4 Giff. 638.]

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*h*) ; *Fanning v. Dunham*, 5 Johns. Ch. 142, 143, 144.

⁴ See *Whitehead v. Peck*, 1 Kelly, 140 ; *Ballinger v. Edwards*, 4 Iredell's Eq. 449.

⁵ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*h*) ; id. B. 1, ch. 4, § 7, note (*k*) ; *Mason v. Gardiner*, 4 Bro. Ch. 436 ; *Rogers v. Rathbun*, 1 Johns. Ch. 367 ; *Fanning v. Dunham*, 5 Johns. Ch. 142, 143, 144.

by an active exertion of its powers; but it has a discretion on the subject, and may prescribe the terms of its interference; and he who seeks equity at its hands, may well be required to do equity. And it is against conscience, that the party should have full relief, and at the same time pocket the money loaned, which may have been granted at his own mere solicitation.¹ For then a statute, made to prevent fraud and oppression, would be made the instrument of fraud. But, in the other case, if equity should relieve the lender, who is plaintiff, it would be aiding a wrongdoer, who is seeking to make the court the means of carrying into effect a transaction manifestly wrong and illegal in itself.²

§ 302. And, upon the like principles, if the borrower has paid the money upon an usurious contract, courts of equity (and, indeed, courts of law also³) will assist him to recover back the excess paid beyond principal and lawful interest; but not further. [So, the borrower may maintain a bill to compel the giving up of securities left as collateral security for a usurious debt, although he might have a defence in an action at law.⁴] For it is no just objection to say, that he is *particeps criminis*, and that *Volenti non fit injuria*. It would be absurd to apply the latter maxim to the case of a man, who, from mere necessity, pays more than the other can in justice demand, and who has been significantly called the slave of the lender. He can in no just sense be said to pay voluntarily. And as to being *particeps criminis*, he stands *in vinculis*, and is compelled to submit to the terms which oppression and his necessities impose on him.⁵ Nor can it be said, in any case of oppression, that the party oppressed is *particeps criminis*; since it is that very hardship, which he labors under, and which is imposed upon him by another, that makes the crime.⁶

¹ *Scott v. Nesbit*, 2 Bro. Ch. 641; s. c. 2 Cox, 183; *Benfield v. Solomons*, 9 Ves. 84.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (h); id. B. 1, ch. 4, § 7, and note (k).

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 7, and note (k); *Smith v. Bromley*, Doug. 696, note; *Browning v. Morris*, Cowp. 792; *Bond v. Hays*, Ex'r, 12 Mass. 34; *Nichols v. Bellows*, 22 Verm. 581.

⁴ *Peters v. Mortimer*, 4 Edw. Ch. 279.

⁵ *Smith v. Bromley*, Doug. 696, note; *Bosanquet v. Dashwood*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 39; *Browning v. Morris*, Cowp. 790; *Rawden v. Shadwell*, Ambler, 269, and Mr. Blunt's notes; 1 Fonbl. Eq. 1, ch. 4, § 8, note (k).

⁶ Lord-Chancellor Talbot, in *Bosanquet v. Dashwood*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 41. The same principle applies to cases of annuities set aside for want of a memorial

§ 303. In regard to gaming contracts, it would follow, *à fortiori*, that courts of equity ought not to interfere in their favor, but ought to afford aid to suppress them; since they are not only prohibited by statute, but may be justly pronounced to be immoral, as the practice tends to idleness, dissipation, and the ruin of families.¹ No one has doubted that, under such circumstances, a bill in equity might be maintained to have any gaming security delivered up and cancelled.² But it was at one time held, that, if the money were actually paid in a case of gaming, courts of equity ought not to assist the loser to recover it back, upon the ground that he is *particeps criminis*. Lord Talbot on one occasion said: "The case of gamesters, to which this (of usury) has been compared, is no way parallel; for there both parties are criminal. And, if two persons will sit down, and endeavor to ruin one another, and one pays the money; if, after payment, he cannot recover it at law, I do not see that a court of equity has any thing to do, but to stand neuter,³ there being in that case no oppression upon the party, as in this.⁴

§ 304. But it is difficult to perceive, why, upon principle, the money should not be recoverable back, in furtherance of a great public policy, independently of any statutable provision.⁵ It has been decided, that, if money is paid upon a gaming security, it duly registered; and an account of the consideration paid, and payments made, will be taken, and the balance only will be required to be paid, upon a decree to give up the security. *Holbrook v. Sharpley*, 19 Ves. 131.

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 6, and note (c). See *Robinson v. Bland*, 2 Burr. 1077.

² *Rawden v. Shadwell*, Ambler, 269, and Mr. Blunt's notes; *Woodroffe v. Farnham*, 2 Vern. 291; *Wynne v. Callender*, 1 Russ. 23; *Baker v. Williams*, cited in Blunt's note to Ambler, 269; *Portarlington v. Soulby*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 104; *Osbaldiston v. Simpson*, 13 Simons, 513.

³ [In America, it has been recently held, that a court of chancery would not set aside a deed, the consideration of which was an illegal wager. It would leave the parties where it found them. *Thomas v. Cronie*, 16 Ohio, 54. See also *Raguert v. Cowles*, 14 Ohio, 55.]

⁴ *Bosanquet v. Dashwood*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 41; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 6; *Rawdon v. Shadwell*, Amb. 269; *Wilkinson v. L'Eaugier*, 2 Y. & Coll. 366. It has been recently held in England, that money, knowingly lent to game, is not recoverable. *McKinnell v. Robinson*, 3 Mees. & Welsb. 434. [So, in Massachusetts, *White v. Buss*, 3 Cush. 448; so, money lent to bet on an election. *Machier v. Morse*, 2 Gratt. 257.]

⁵ See *McKinney v. Pope*, 3 B. Monroe, 93; *Boner v. Montgomery*, 9 B. Monroe, 123.

may be recovered back, for the security is utterly void.¹ Why is not the original gaming contract equally void? And if it be, why is it not equally within the rule and the policy on which the rule is founded? [* Perhaps the case of gaming contracts is not essentially different from that of most other illegal contracts. It has often been argued that the higher and wiser policy in regard to all illegal contracts would be to allow money paid, in their furtherance, to be recovered back. But the opposite rule has finally prevailed, with few exceptions. And we are not able to comprehend how, or why, a court of equity should be able to grant relief upon principles different from those recognized in courts of law. There may be exceptions, based upon great oppression, and unconscionable advantage taken of one's weakness or want of caution, through the form of an illegal contract, where the courts of equity will treat the fraud as being the chief ingredient, and grant relief to the injured party upon that ground. But where the parties stand upon equal footing, and the contract is illegal, they cannot expect aid either from the courts of law or equity.²]

§ 305. The civil law contains a most wholesome enforcement of moral justice upon this subject. It not only protects the loser against any liability to pay the money won in gaming; but if he has paid the money, he and his heirs have a right to recover it back at any distance of time; and no presumption or limitation of time runs against the claim. "Victum in aleæ lusu, non posse conveniri. Et, si solverit, habere repetitionem, tam ipsum, quam hæredes ejus, adversus victorem et ejus hæredes; idque perpetuo, et etiam post triginta annos."³ Thirty years was the general limitation of rights in other cases.

§ 306. Questions are also often made, as to how far contracts, which are illegal by some positive law, or which are declared so upon principles of public policy, are capable, as between the parties, of a substantial confirmation. This subject has been already alluded to, and will be again touched in other places. The general rule is, that wherever any contract or conveyance is void, either

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 6, and note (c).

² [* Spalding v. Preston, 21 Vt. 9; Adams v. Gay, 19 Vt. 358; Brightly, Eq. Jur. 94, 95, and cases cited. The statutes of many of the American States allow the loser in gaming to recover back the money lost. Brightly, Eq. Jur. *supra*, and cases cited.]

³ Cod. Lib. 3, tit. 43, l. 1; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 6, note (c).

by a positive law, or upon principles of public policy, it is deemed incapable of confirmation, upon the maxim, *Quod ab initio non valet, in tractu temporis non convalescet*.¹ But where it is merely voidable, or turns upon circumstances of undue advantage, surprise, or imposition, there, if it is deliberately, and upon full examination, confirmed by the parties, such confirmation will avail to give it an *ex post facto* validity.²

§ 307. Let us, in the next place, pass to the consideration of the second head of constructive frauds; namely, of those which arise from some peculiar confidential or fiduciary relation between the parties. In this class of cases, there is often to be found some intermixture of deceit, imposition, overreaching, unconscionable advantage, or other mark of direct and positive fraud. But the principle on which courts of equity act in regard thereto stands, independent of any such ingredient, upon a motive of general public policy; and it is designed, in some degree, as a protection to the parties against the effects of overweening confidence, and self-delusion, and the infirmities of hasty and precipitate judgment. These courts will, therefore, often interfere in such cases, where, but for such a peculiar relation, they would either abstain wholly from granting relief, or would grant it in a very modified and abstemious manner.³

§ 308. It is undoubtedly true, as has been said, that it is not upon the feelings which a delicate and honorable man must experience, nor upon any notion of discretion, to prevent a voluntary gift or other act of a man, whereby he strips himself of his property, that courts of equity have deemed themselves at liberty to interpose in cases of this sort.⁴ They do not sit, or affect to sit, in judgment upon cases, as *custodes morum*, enforcing the strict rules of morality. But they do sit to enforce what has not inaptly been called a technical morality. If confidence is reposed, it must

¹ Vernon's case, 4 Co. 2, b.

² Newland on Contracts, ch. 25, p. 496 to 503; *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 125; s. c. 1 Atk. 301; *Roberts v. Roberts*, 3 P. Will. 74, Mr. Cox's note; *Cole v. Gibson*, 1 Ves. 507; *Crone v. Ballard*, 3 Bro. Ch. 120; *Cowen v. Milner*, 3 P. Will. 292, note (C); *Cole v. Gibbons*, 3 P. Will. 289; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 13, note (r); id. ch. 2, § 14, note (v), and the note to § 263.

³ See *Goddard v. Carlisle*, 9 Price, 169; *Gallatian v. Cunningham*, 8 Cowen, 361; *Taylor v. Taylor*, 8 How. U. S. 200. [* See also *Blandy v. Kimber*, 24 Beavan, 148.]

⁴ *Huguenin v. Baseley*, 14 Ves. 290.

be faithfully acted upon, and preserved from any intermixture of imposition. If influence is acquired, it must be kept free from the taint of selfish interest, and cunning, and overreaching bargains. If the means of personal control are given, they must be always restrained to purposes of good faith and personal good.¹ Courts of equity will not, therefore, arrest or set aside an act or contract merely because a man of more honor would not have entered into it. There must be some relation between the parties, which compels the one to make a full discovery to the other, or to abstain from all selfish projects. But, when such a relation does exist, courts of equity, acting upon this superinduced ground, in aid of general morals, will not suffer one party, standing in a situation of which he can avail himself against the other, to derive advantage from that circumstance, for it is founded in a breach of confidence.² The general principle, which governs in all cases of this sort, is, that if a confidence is reposed, and that confidence is abused, courts of equity will grant relief.³

§ 309. In the first place, as to the relation of parent and child. The natural and just influence which a parent has over a child renders it peculiarly important for courts of justice to watch over and protect the interests of the latter; and, therefore, all contracts and conveyances, whereby benefits are secured by children to their parents, are objects of jealousy, and if they are not entered into with scrupulous good faith, and are not reasonable under the circumstances, they will be set aside,⁴ unless third persons have acquired an interest under them;⁵ especially where the original purposes for which they have been obtained are perverted or used as a mere cover.⁶ [And the same principles apply to a voluntary

¹ See *Taylor v. Taylor*, 8 How. U. S. 200.

² *Fox v. Mackreth*, 2 Bro. Ch. 407, 420; *Boney v. Hollingsworth*, 23 Ala. 698.

³ *Gartside v. Isherwood*, 1 Bro. Ch. App. 560, 562; *Osmond v. Fitzroy*, 3 P. Will. 129, 131, Cox's note. See the *English Quarterly Magazine* for May, 1843, Vol. 29, Pt. 2, p. 362 to 378.

⁴ See *Slocum v. Marshall*, 2 Wash. C. C. 397; *Baker v. Bradley*, 35 Eng. Law & Eq. 449.

⁵ See *Taylor v. Taylor*, 8 How. U. S. 201; also *Caspell v. Dubois*, 4 Barb. 393; *Brice v. Brice*, 5 Barb. 533; *Whalan v. Whalan*, 2 Cow. 537.

⁶ *Young v. Peachey*, 2 Atk. 254; *Glissen v. Ogden*, cited *ibid.* 258; *Cocking v. Pratt*, 1 Ves. 400; *Hawes v. Wyatt*, 3 Bro. Ch. 156; 1 Mad. Ch. Pract. 244, 245; *Carpenter v. Heriot*, 1 Eden, 338; *Blackborn v. Edgely*, 1 P. Will. 607.

gift to a person who has put himself *in loco parentis*, towards the donor.^{1]} But we are not to indulge undue suspicions of jealousy, or to make unfavorable presumptions as a matter of course in cases of this sort. "It is undoubtedly the duty of courts carefully to watch and examine the circumstances attending transactions of this kind, when brought under review before them, to discover if any undue influence has been exercised in obtaining the conveyance. But to consider a parent disqualified to take a voluntary deed from his child, without consideration, on account of their relationship, is assuming a principle at war with all filial as well as parental duty and affection, and acting on the presumption that a parent, instead of wishing to promote the interest and welfare, would be seeking to overreach and defraud his child. Whereas, the presumption ought to be, in the absence of all proof tending to a contrary conclusion, that the advancement of the interest of the child was the object in view; and to presume the existence of circumstances conducing that result. Such a presumption harmonizes with the moral obligations of a parent to provide for his child, and is founded upon the same benign principle that governs cases of purchases made by parents in the name of a child. The *prima facie* presumption is, that it was intended as an advancement to the child and so not falling within the principle of a resulting trust. The natural and reasonable presumption in all transactions of this kind is, that a benefit was intended the child, because in the discharge of a moral and parental duty. And the interest of the child is abundantly guarded and protected, by keeping a watchful eye over the transaction, to see that no undue influence was brought to bear upon it."²

[See *Baker v. Tucker*, 2 Eng. Law & Eq. 1, where *Blackborn v. Edgely* is elaborately examined and approved.] *Blunden v. Barker*, 1 P. Will. 639; *Morris v. Burroughs*, 1 Atk. 402; *Tendril v. Smith*, 2 Atk. 85; *Heron v. Heron*, 2 Atk. 160. See *Jenkins v. Pye*, 12 Peters, 241.

¹ *Archer v. Hudson*, 7 Beav. 551. See *Maitland v. Irving*, 15 Sim. 437; *Maitland v. Backhouse*, 16 Sim. 68.

² *Jenkins v. Pye*, 12 Peters, 253, 254. The opinion of the court in this case was delivered by Mr. Justice Thompson, and immediately preceding the passage cited in the text, he said: "But the grounds mainly relied upon to invalidate the deed, were, that being from a daughter to her father, rendered it at least *prima facie*, void. And if not void on this ground, it was so because it was obtained by the undue influence of paternal authority. The first ground of objection seeks to establish the broad principle, that a deed from a child to a parent, conveying the real estate of the child, ought, upon considerations of public policy, growing

[* § 309 a. Transactions between parent and child are to be regarded with jealousy, but in arrangements between father and son, for the settlement of family estates, if the settlement be not obtained by misrepresentation or the suppression of the truth, if the father acquires no personal benefit, and if the settlement is a reasonable one, the court will support it, even though the father did exert parental authority and influence over the son to procure the execution of it.¹ Transactions between parent and child, in the nature of a settlement of property, or rights, are regarded with favor, and not with minute regard to the consideration; but if in the nature of bounty from the child soon after he obtains his majority, are to be viewed with jealousy, and as the subject of interposition of the court, to guard against undue influence. Hence, where a mortgage was made by father and son immediately after the latter had obtained his majority, to secure debts due from the father, to some extent incurred in improvements on the property and in maintaining and educating the son, and where the wife joined in the conveyance, the son having no separate advice on the occasion, it was held the mortgage could not be supported as a family arrangement, but was void, as obtained by undue influence.²]

out of the relation of the parties, to be deemed void; and numerous cases in the English chancery have been referred to, which are supposed to establish this principle. We do not deem it necessary to travel over all these authorities; we have looked into the leading cases, and cannot discover any thing to warrant the broad and unqualified doctrine contended for on the part of the appellees. All the cases are accompanied with some ingredient, showing undue influence exercised by the parent, operating upon the fears or hopes of the child; and sufficient to show reasonable grounds to presume that the act was not perfectly free and voluntary on the part of the child; and, in some cases, although there may be circumstances tending, in some small degree, to show undue influence; yet, if the agreement appears reasonable, it has been considered enough to outweigh light circumstances, so as not to affect the validity of the deed. It becomes the less necessary for us to go into a critical examination of the English chancery doctrine on this subject, for should the cases be found to countenance it, we should not be disposed to adopt or sanction the broad principle contended for, that the deed of a child to a parent is to be deemed *prima facie* void.

¹ [* Hartopp v. Hartopp, 21 Beavan, 259.

² Baker v. Bradley, 7 De G., M. & G. 597. The case of Field v. Evans, 15 Simons, 375, is here examined and approved. The following cases, upon the subject of parental influence, may be examined with advantage, and are not elsewhere referred to in this work. Carpenter v. Heriot, 1 Eden, 338; Thornber v. Sheard, 12 Beavan, 589; Houghton v. Houghton, 15 Beavan, 278; Wallace v.

§ 309 *b*. [The same general principles apply to other family relations besides those of parent and child. Thus, where three brothers induced their sister, who had a reversionary interest in land devised by their father to the brothers for life, to release her interest to them without any consideration except a belief (the only evidence of what was the recital thereof in the deed prepared by the brothers) that the father intended to devise the land to the brothers in fee; this deed was set aside, it appearing that the sister was in a feeble state of health, and had always relied upon the brothers for advice.¹]

§ 310. In the next place, as to the relation of client and attorney or solicitor. It is obvious that this relation must give rise to great confidence between the parties, and to very strong influences over the actions, and rights, and interests of the client.² The situation of an attorney or solicitor puts it in his power to avail himself, not only of the necessities of his client, but of his good nature, liberality, and credulity, to obtain undue advantages, bargains, and gratuities. Hence, the law, with a wise providence, not only watches over all the transactions of parties in this predicament, but it often interposes to declare transactions void, which, between other persons, would be held unobjectionable.³ It does not so much consider the bearing or hardship of its doctrine upon particular cases, as it does the importance of preventing a general public mischief, which may be brought about by means, secret and inaccessible to judicial scrutiny, from the dangerous influences arising from the confidential relation of the parties.⁴ By establishing the principle, that, while the relation of client and attorney subsists in its full vigor, the latter shall derive no benefit to him-

Wallace, 2 Dru. & War. 452; *Wright v. Vanderplank*, 1 Jur. n. s. 932; *Bury v. Oppenheim*, 26 Beavan, 594.]

¹ *Sears v. Shafer*, 2 Selden, 268. See also *Boney v. Hollingsworth*, 23 Ala. 690; *Hewitt v. Crane*, 2 Halst. Ch. 159, 631.

² *Walmesley v. Booth*, 2 Atk. 25; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, note (*k*). See also *Barnesley v. Powell*, 1 Ves. 284; *Bulkley v. Wilford*, 1 Clark & Finn. 102, 177 to 181; *id.* 183; *ante*, § 218; *Edwards v. Meyrick*, 2 Hare, 60, 268; [** Corley v. Lord Stafford*, 1 De G. & J. 238.]

³ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 94; *Welles v. Middleton*, 1 Cox, 112, 125; 3 P. Will. 131, Cox's note (1); *Wright v. Proud*, 13 Ves. 136; *Wood v. Downes*, 18 Ves. 126; *Savery v. King*, 35 Eng. Law & Eq. 100; *ante*, § 219.

⁴ *Wood v. Downes*, 18 Ves. 126; *ante*, § 219; *De Montmorency v. Devereaux*, 7 Clark & Finn. 188.

self from the contracts, or bounty, or other negotiations of the former;¹ it supersedes the necessity of any inquiry into the particular means, extent, and exertion of influence in a given case, a task often difficult, and ill supported by evidence, which can be drawn from any satisfactory sources.² This doctrine is not neces-

¹ Wood v. Downes, 18 Ves. 126; Jones v. Tripp, Jac. Rep. 322; Goddard v. Carlisle, 9 Price, 169; Edwards v. Meyrick, 2 Hare, 68.

² See Welles v. Middleton, 1 Cox, 125; Wright v. Proud, 13 Ves. 137. See Cheslyn v. Dalby, 2 Younge & Coll. 194, 195. In the case of Hunter v. Atkins (3 M. & Keen, 113), Lord Brougham made the following remarks on this subject: "There is no dispute upon the rules which, generally speaking, regulate cases of this description. Mr. Alderman Atkins is either to be regarded in the light of an agent, confidentially intrusted with the management of Admiral Hunter's concerns, a person at least in whom he reposed a very special confidence, or he is not. If he is not to be so regarded, then a deed of gift, or other disposition of property in his favor, must stand good, unless some direct fraud were practised upon the maker of it; unless some fraud, either by misrepresentation or by suppression of facts, misled him, or he was of unsound mind when the deed was made. If the alderman did stand in a confidential relation towards him, then the party, seeking to set aside the deed, may not be called upon to show direct fraud; but he must satisfy the court, by the circumstances, that some advantage was taken of the confidential relation in which the alderman stood. If the alderman stood towards the admiral in any of the known relations of guardian and ward, attorney and client, trustee and *cestui que trust*, &c., then, in order to support the deed, he ought to show that no such advantage was taken; that all was fair; that he received the bounty freely and knowingly on the giver's part, and as a stranger might have done. For I take the rule to be this: There are certain relations known to the law, as attorney, guardian, trustee; if a person, standing in these relations to client, ward, or *cestui que trust*, takes a gift or makes a bargain, the proof lies upon him, that he has dealt with the other party, the client, ward, &c., exactly as a stranger would have done, taking no advantage of his influence or knowledge, putting the other party on his guard, bringing every thing to his knowledge, which he himself knew. In short, the rule, rightly considered, is, that the person standing in such relation must, before he can take a gift, or even enter into a transaction, place himself exactly in the same position as a stranger would have been in; so that he may gain no advantage whatever from his relation to the other party, beyond what may be the natural and unavoidable consequence of kindness arising out of that relation. A client, for example, may naturally entertain a kindly feeling towards an attorney or solicitor, by whose assistance he has long benefited; and he may fairly and wisely desire to benefit him by a gift, or without such an intention being the predominating motive, he may wish to give him the advantage of a sale or a lease. No law, that is tolerable among civilized men, men who have the benefits of civility without the evils of excessive refinement and overdone subtlety, can ever forbid such a transaction, provided the client be of mature age and of sound mind, and there be nothing to show that deception was practised, or that the attorney or solicitor availed himself of

sarily limited to cases where the contract or other transaction respects the rights or property in controversy, in the particular suit in respect to which the attorney or solicitor is advising or acting for his client; but it may extend to other contracts and transactions disconnected therefrom, or at least where, from the attendant circumstances, there is reason to presume that the attorney and solicitor possessed some marked influence, ascendancy, or other advantage over his client in respect to them.¹

his situation to withhold any knowledge, or to exercise any influence hurtful to others and advantageous to himself. In a word, standing in the relation in which he stands to the other party, the proof lies upon him (whereas, in the case of a stranger, it would lie on those who opposed him) to show that he has placed himself in the position of a stranger; that he has cut off, as it were, the connection which bound him to the party giving or contracting; and that nothing has happened which might not have happened had no such connection subsisted. The authorities mean nothing else than this, when they say, as in *Gibson v. Jeyes* (6 Ves. 277), that attorney and client, trustee and *cestui que trust*, may deal, but it must be at arm's length; the parties putting themselves in the situation of purchasers and vendors, and performing (as the court said, and, I take leave to observe, not very felicitously, or even very correctly) all the duties of those characters. The authorities mean no more, taken fairly and candidly towards the court, when they say, as in *Wright v. Proud* (15 Ves. 138), that an attorney shall not take a gift from his client, while the relation subsists, though the transaction may be not only free from fraud, but the most moral in its nature; a *dictum* reduced, in *Hatch v. Hatch* (9 Ves. 296), to this, that it is almost impossible for a gift from client to attorney to stand, because the difficulty is extreme of showing that every thing was voluntary and fair, and with full warning and perfect knowledge; for in *Harris v. Tremeneere* (15 Ves. 40), the court only held that, in such a case, a suspicion attaches on the transaction, and calls for minute examination."

¹ See *Austin v. Chambers*, 6 Cl. & Finn. 1; *Trevelyan v. Charter*, 12 Cl. & Finn. 714; *Edwards v. Meyrick*, 2 Hare, 60, 68. Mr. Vice-Chancellor Wigram here said: "It was not insisted in argument that a solicitor is under an actual incapacity to purchase from his client. There is not, in that case, the positive incapacity which exists between a trustee and his *cestui que trust*; but the rule the court imposes is, that—inasmuch as the parties stand in a relation which gives, or may give, the solicitor an advantage over the client—the *onus* lies on the solicitor to prove that the transaction was fair. *Montesquieu v. Sandys*, 18 Ves. 302; *Cane v. Lord Allen*, 2 Dow, 289. The rule is expressed by Lord Eldon (6 Ves. 278; see also Sugden, *Vend. & Pur.* Vol. 3, p. 238, ed. 10) to be, that if the attorney 'will mix with the character of attorney that of vendor, he shall, if the propriety of the transaction comes in question, manifest that he has given his client all that reasonable advice against himself that he would have given him against a third person.' It was argued that the rule I have referred to has no application, unless the defendant was the plaintiff's solicitor *in hac re*,

§ 311. On the one hand, it is not necessary to establish that there has been fraud or imposition upon the client; and, on the other hand, this argument is no doubt well founded. *Jones v. Thomas*, 2 Y. & Coll. 498; *Gibson v. Jeyes*, 6 Ves. 266, 278. It appears to me, however, that the question, whether Meyrick was the solicitor *in hac re*, is one rather of words than of substance. The rule of equity, which subjects transactions between solicitor and client to other and stricter tests than those which apply to ordinary transactions, is not an isolated rule, but is a branch of a rule applicable to all transactions between man and man, in which the relation between the contracting parties is such as to destroy the equal footing on which such parties should stand. In some cases, as between trustee and *cestui que trust*, the rule goes to the extent of creating a positive incapacity; the duties of the office of trustee requiring, on general principles, that that particular case should be so guarded. The case of solicitor and client is, however, different. In the case of *Gibson v. Jeyes*, there was evidence that the client was of advanced age, and of much infirmity, both of mind and body, that the consideration was inadequate, and of various other circumstances. Lord Eldon there shows how each of these circumstances gave rise to its appropriate duty on the part of the attorney. In other cases, where an attorney has been employed to manage an estate, he has been considered as bound to prove that he gave his employer the benefit of all the knowledge which he had acquired in his character of manager or professional agent, in order to sustain a bargain made for his own advantage. *Cane v. Lord Allen*, 2 Dow, 294. But as the communication of such knowledge by the attorney will place the parties upon an equality, when it is proved that the communication was made, the difficulty of supporting the transaction is *quoad hoc* removed. If, on the other hand, the attorney has not had any concern with the estate respecting which the question arises, the particular duties to which any given situation of confidence might give rise, cannot of course attach upon him, whatever may be the other duties which the mere office of attorney may impose. If the attorney, being employed to sell, becomes himself the purchaser, his duties and his interests are directly opposed to each other, and it would be difficult—and, without the clearest evidence that no advantage was taken by the attorney of his position, and that the vendor had all the knowledge which could be given him in order to form a judgment, it would be impossible—to support the transaction. In other cases the relation between the parties may simply produce a degree of influence and ascendancy, placing the client in circumstances of disadvantage; as where he is indebted to the attorney, and is unable to discharge the debt. The relative position of the parties, in such a case, must at least impose upon the attorney the duty of giving the full value for the estate, and the *onus* of proving that he did so. If he proves the full value to have been given, the ground for any unfavorable inference is removed. The cases may be traced through every possible variation until we reach the simple case where, though the relation of solicitor and client exists in one transaction, and, therefore, personal influence or ascendancy may operate in another, yet the relation not existing *in hac re*, the rule of equity to which I am now adverting may no longer apply. The nature of the proof, therefore, which the court requires, must depend upon the circumstances of each case, according as they may have placed the

other hand, it is not necessarily void throughout, *ipso facto*.¹ But the burden of establishing its perfect fairness, adequacy, and equity is thrown upon the attorney, upon the general rule, that he who bargains in a matter of advantage with a person, placing a confidence in him, is bound to show that a reasonable use has been made of that confidence; a rule applying equally to all persons standing in confidential relations with each other.² If no such proof is established, courts of equity treat the case as one of constructive fraud.³ In this respect there is said to be a distinc-

attorney in a position in which his duties and his pecuniary interests were conflicting, or may have given him a knowledge which his client did not possess, or some influence, or ascendancy, or other advantage over his client; or, notwithstanding the existence of the relation of attorney and client, may have left the parties substantially at arm's length, and on an equal footing; this seems deducible from the cases. *Gibson v. Jeyes*, 6 Ves. 278; *Hatch v. Hatch*, 9 Ves. 292; *Welles v. Middleton*, 1 Cox, 112; s. c. cited 18 Ves. 127; *Wood v. Downes*, 18 Ves. 120; *Bellew v. Russell*, 1 B. & Beatty, 96; *Montesquieu v. Sandys*, 18 Ves. 302; *Cane v. Lord Allen*, 2 Dow, 289; *Hunter v. Atkins*, 3 Myl. & K. 113. I have, therefore, to consider the position in which these parties actually stood to each other. And I certainly am not treating the case of the plaintiff too strictly when I exclude all considerations which the bill does not state as having existed; and, according to the statements in the bill, it does not appear that the defendant had any peculiar or exclusive knowledge of these particular farms or the value of them, or that he had undertaken any particular duties respecting them, which were opposed to his becoming a purchaser. No equity appears to me to arise, except that which might arise from the mere possibility of the relation of attorney and client, giving the attorney some influence or ascendancy over the client, and the circumstance that the plaintiff was pressed by him to pay his bill of costs. On the evidence in the cause I am satisfied that the only ground upon which I can proceed is this bare relation between the parties. Taking the obligations of the defendant to stand as high as the relative position of the parties enable me to place them, admitting the defendant to be the attorney *in hac re*, I cannot consider that he is bound to do more than prove that he gave the full value for the estate." *Post*, § 313.

¹ *Howell v. Ransom*, 11 Paige, 538; *Evans v. Ellis*, 5 Denio, 640.

² *Gibson v. Jeyes*, 6 Ves. 278; *Montesquieu v. Sandys*, 18 Ves. 313; *Bellew v. Russell*, 1 B. & Beatty, 104, 107; *Harris v. Tremenheere*, 15 Ves. 34, 39; *Cane v. Lord Allen*, 2 Dow, 289, 299; *Edwards v. Meyrick*, 2 Hare, 60. The like rule applies to counsel employed as a confidential adviser; for he is disabled from purchasing, for his own benefit, charges on his client's estate without his permission; and the disability will continue as long as the reason exists, although the confidential employment may have ended. *Carter v. Palman*, 8 Clark & Finn. 657, 706.

³ See *Jones v. Thomas*, 2 Y. & Coll. 498. In this case it was held, that where an account is decreed to be taken between an attorney and his client, in the

tion between the case of an attorney and client, and that of a trustee and *cestui que trust*. In the former, if the attorney, retaining his connection, contracts with his client, he is subject to the *onus* of proving that no advantage has been taken of the situation of the latter. But in the case of a trustee, it is not sufficient to show that no advantage has been taken; but the *cestui que trust* may set aside the transaction at his own option.¹ The reason of this distinction, which savors somewhat of nicety, if not of subtilty, seems to be, that in the case of clients the rule is general and applicable to all contracts, conveyances, and negotiations between the attorney and client, and is not limited to the property about which the attorney is retained, or the suit in which he is acting. In the case of a trustee, the rule giving the *cestui que trust* an option, is limited to the purchase of the first property, and as to other property it would seem that the rule is the same as in other fiduciary relations, that is, at most, it only shifts the burden of proof from the seller to the buyer, to show the entire fairness of the transaction; or leaves the seller to establish presumptively that there has been some irregularity in the bargain, or some influence connected with the relation under which it has been made.²

§ 312. Thus, if a bond is obtained by an attorney, from a client who is poor and distressed, and it does not appear to be for a full and fair consideration, it will be set aside, as obtained by undue influence from his station.³ Upon a like ground, a bond taken by an attorney from his client for a specific sum, will not be allowed to stand as a security, except for the amount of fees and charges due to the attorney; for it is the general policy of courts of justice, in cases between client and attorney, to protect the suitors, and not to suffer any advantage to be taken of them by

course of which the attorney has taken securities from the client, the attorney must not only prove the securities, but the consideration for which they were given. *Champion v. Rigby*, 1 Russ. & Mylne, 539.

¹ *Cane v. Lord Allen*, 2 Dow, 289, 299; *post*, § 322. See the remarks of Lord Brougham, in *Hunter v. Atkins*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 113; *ante*, § 310, note, where he seems to put the cases of client and attorney, guardian and ward, trustee and *cestui que trust*, upon the same general footing, and is governed by the same rule. The same distinction is stated in *Edwards v. Meyrick*, 2 Hare, 60, 68, 69; *ante*, § 310, note.

² See *post*, § 313; *Montesquieu v. Sandys*, 18 Ves. 302, 318.

³ *Proof v. Hines*, Cas. T. Talb. 111; *Walmesley v. Booth*, 2 Atk. 29.

securities of this sort.¹ And for the same reason, a judgment, obtained by a solicitor against his client for security of costs, will be overhauled, even after a considerable lapse of time.² So, a gift made to an attorney, *pendente lite* (for it would be otherwise if the relation had completely ceased), will be set aside as arising from the exercise of improper influence;³ for it has been said, with great force, that there would be no bounds to the crushing influence of the power of an attorney, who has the affairs of a man in his hand, if it were not so.⁴ And sales made, and annuities granted to attorneys, under similar circumstances, will, upon the same principles of public policy, be set aside, at least, unless they are established to have been transacted *uberrimâ fide*.⁵

[* § 312 *a*. Where an elderly lady married a barrister who had for some years been her confidential friend and adviser, and, before the marriage, undertook to prepare a settlement of his intended wife's property, according to certain stipulations between them; it was held that, having undertaken to prepare a settlement, he was bound to prepare such an one as, under the circumstances, a conveyancer would have drawn, or the court would have sanctioned.⁶ And the court gave such a direction to the property, as a proper settlement would have secured. So, also, where a solicitor's clerk, who was consulted by a lady in regard to a mortgage on her estate, by means of the knowledge thus acquired, was enabled to purchase the mortgage at much less than its amount, it was held that the lady was entitled to the benefit of the bargain.⁷ And where the solicitor becomes the purchaser of an estate of his client, the burden of sustaining it, at least within twenty years, is upon him; and it has been said, by eminent judges, that

¹ *Newman v. Payne*, 4 Bro. Ch. 350; s. c. 2 Ves. Jr. 200; *Langstaffe v. Taylor*, 14 Ves. 262; *Wood v. Downes*, 18 Ves. 120, 127; *Pitcher v. Rigby*, 9 Price, 79; *Jones v. Roberts*, 9 Beavan, 419.

² *Drapers' Company v. Davis*, 2 Atk. 295.

³ *Oldham v. Hand*, 2 Ves. 259; *Welles v. Middleton*, 1 Cox, 112, 125; *Harris v. Tremenheere*, 15 Ves. 34; *Wood v. Downes*, 18 Ves. 120, 127; *Morse v. Royal*, 12 Ves. 371.

⁴ *Welles v. Middleton*, 1 Cox, 125; *Hatch v. Hatch*, 9 Ves. 292, 296.

⁵ *Harris v. Tremenheere*, 15 Ves. 34; *Gibson v. Jeyes*, 6 Ves. 266; *Wood v. Downes*, 18 Ves. 120; *Bellew v. Russell*, 1 Ball & Beatt. 104.

⁶ [* *Corley v. Lord Stafford*, 1 De Gex & Jones, 238.

⁷ *Hobday v. Peters*, 6 Jur. n. s. 794; s. c. 8 W. R. 512. See also *Cowdry v. Day*, 5 Jur. n. s. 1199.

the same weight ought not to be given to the lapse of time, during the continuance of the relation of attorney and client, as in other cases.¹ Where the solicitor proposes to take any contract from his client for compensation, beyond what the law provides, or in a different form more advantageous to himself, it is his "bounden duty" to inform his client, that the law allows no such charge.²

§ 312 b. And in a later case,³ between attorney and client, it was held in the court of Chancery Appeal, upon argument and very extended consideration, that it is incumbent upon persons who receive benefits from those towards whom they stand in confidential relation, to show that such persons had competent and independent advice, and this rule is not affected by the age or capacity of the persons conferring the benefits, or the nature of the benefits conferred. But this will not extend to interfere with mere trifling gifts, without proof, not only of influence resulting from the relation, but of *mala fides*, or of undue and unfair exercise of the influence.

§ 312 c. We regret to feel compelled to add to this testimony of the perfect truthfulness of the profession in England (inasmuch as clients will be regarded there as equally safe in their hands where the interests of other members of the profession are concerned, as in other cases) that we fear that would not equally hold true, everywhere in America. We have learned of some flagrant instances of fraud practised by solicitors upon clients, wherein the advice of independent counsel formed one element in the scheme of imposition. We fear that the guaranty of independent counsel might sometimes provoke the inquiry, *Quis custodiet custodes?* From our own experience we should apprehend that any member of the profession who would himself take advantage of the confidence of a client would always find associates in the profession base enough to act as independent advisers for the victims. We should always feel suspicious where the *bona fides* of the transaction was made to rest in any degree upon so slender a guaranty as we should feel this to be in our own country. We hope the time may come when such a guaranty will not have to depend, for its weight, upon the known personal purity and truth-

¹ *Gresley v. Mousley*, 5 Jur. N. S. 583.

² *Lyddon v. Moss*, 5 Jur. N. S. 637; *Morgan v. Higgins*, 5 Jur. N. S. 236; s. c. 1 Giff. 270.

³ *Rhodes v. Bate*, 11 Jur. N. S. 803; s. c. 12 id. 178.

fulness of the adviser, but upon the mere fact that he is a member of an honorable profession, and therefore presumptively honorable himself.

§ 312 *d*. This question is discussed in a late case,¹ by a judge of great learning and experience, with his accustomed fearlessness and point. It is here declared, that all securities taken by the solicitor are presumptively void, and the onus is thrown upon the creditor of showing them fair and upon sufficient consideration; and that they will be allowed to stand only for the actual indebtedness, as found by the court. The language of Judge Sharswood, in his lecture on professional ethics, is here adopted: ² “When the relation of solicitor and client exists, and a security is taken by the solicitor from his client, the presumption is that the transaction is unfair, and the onus of proving its fairness is upon the solicitor.”]

§ 313. Indeed, the general principle is so well established, that Lord Eldon, on one occasion, said: “It is almost impossible, in the course of the connection of guardian and ward, attorney and client, trustee and *cestui que trust*, that a transaction shall stand, purporting to be bounty for the execution of an antecedent duty.”³ But, where the relation is completely dissolved, and the parties are no longer under the antecedent influence, but deal with each other at arm’s length, there is no ground to apply the principle, and they stand upon the rights and duties common to all other persons.⁴

¹ *Brown v. Bulkley*, 1 McCarter, 451, by GREEN, Chancellor.

² Sharswood, Prof. Ethics, 109.]

³ *Hatch v. Hatch*, 9 Ves. 296, 297. Mr. Maddock, in 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 95, note (*f*), has suggested that what is said as to an attorney, in *Morse v. Royal*, 12 Ves. 371, and in *Wright v. Proud*, 13 Ves. 138, does not seem warranted by the authorities. I confess myself at a loss precisely to understand what Mr. Maddock intended by this remark. Surely he could not mean to say that a gift to an attorney, while that relation continued, could not be avoided, unless fraud or imposition were proved; for that would be contradicted by the doctrine maintained in several cases. *Welles v. Middleton*, 1 Cox, 125; *Hatch v. Hatch*, 9 Ves. 296, 297; *Gibson v. Jeyes*, 6 Ves. 276; *Wood v. Downes*, 18 Ves. 123; *Oldham v. Hand*, 2 Ves. 259; *Montesquieu v. Sandys*, 18 Ves. 313. See also *Bellew v. Russell*, 1 Ball & Beatt. 104, 107; *Harris v. Tremeneere*, 15 Ves. 34, 42; *Walmsley v. Booth*, 2 Atk. 29, 30. See also *Wendell v. Van Rensselaer*, 1 Johns. Ch. 350; *Hylton v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 547, as cited by Lord Eldon, 18 Ves. 126; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 31, p. 453, &c.; *Welles v. Middleton*, 1 Cox, 125; 18 Ves. 126.

⁴ *Gibson v. Jeyes*, 6 Ves. 277; *Oldham v. Hand*, 2 Ves. 259; *Montesquieu v.*

And the same rule will or may apply, where the transaction is totally disconnected with the relation, and concerns objects and things not embraced in, or affected by, or dependent upon, that relation;¹ and there is an absence of all other circumstances, which may create a just suspicion as to the integrity and fairness of the transaction. [* But the same rule will not always apply to testamentary disposition in favor of an attorney by his client, which might be applicable to such a gift, *inter vivos*.²]

§ 314. Similar considerations apply to the case of a medical adviser and his patient.³ For it would be a meagre sort of justice to say that the sort of policy which has induced the court to interfere between client and attorney, should be restricted to such cases; since as much mischief might be produced, and as much fraud and dishonesty be practised, if transactions were permitted to stand, which arose between parties in equally confidential relations.⁴

§ 315. In the next place, the relation of principal and agent. This is affected by the same considerations as the preceding, founded upon the same enlightened public policy.⁵ In all cases of this sort the principal contracts for the aid and benefit of the skill and judgment of the agent; and the habitual confidence reposed in the latter, makes all his acts and statements possess a commanding influence over the former. Indeed, in such cases, the agent too often so entirely misleads the judgment of his principal that, while he is seeking his own peculiar advantage, he seems but consulting the advantage and interest of his principal; placing himself in the odious predicament so strongly stigmatized by Cicero: “Totius autem injustitiæ nulla capitalior est, quam eorum, Sandys, 18 Ves. 313; Walmsley v. Booth, 2 Atk. 29, 30; Wood v. Downes, 18 Ves. 126, 127.

¹ Montesquieu v. Sandys, 18 Ves. 313; Newland on Contracts, ch. 31, p. 456, 457, 458; Howell v. Baker, 4 Johns. Ch. 118; Edwards v. Meyrick, 2 Hare, 60, 68; Jones v. Thomas, 2 Younge & Coll. 498; Gibson v. Jeyes, 6 Ves. 266, 278; *ante*, § 310.

² [*Hindson v. Weatherill, 5 De Gex, M. & G. 301.]

³ See Billing v. Southee, 10 Eng. Law & Eq. 37; Crispell v. Dubois, 4 Barbour, 393.

⁴ Dent v. Bennett, 2 Keen, 539; 4 Mylne & Craig, 269, 276, 277; Gibson v. Russell, 2 Younge & Coll. N. R. 104; s. c. The Jurist (English), Oct. 7th, 1843, p. 875. But see Pratt v. Barker, 1 Sim. 1.

⁵ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 12, note (k); Benson v. Heathom, 1 Younge & Coll. N. R. 326.

qui, cum maxime fallunt, id agunt, ut viri boni esse videantur.”¹ It is, therefore, for the common security of all mankind, that gifts procured by agents, and purchases made by them, from their principals, should be scrutinized with a close and vigilant suspicion.² And, indeed, considering the abuses which may attend any dealings of this sort between principals and agents, a doubt has been expressed whether it would not have been wiser for the law in all cases to have prohibited them; since there must almost always be a conflict between duty and interest on such occasions.³ Be this as it may, it is very certain that agents are not permitted to become secret vendors or purchasers of property which they are authorized to buy or sell for their principals; or, by abusing their confidence, to acquire unreasonable gifts or advantages;⁴ or, indeed, to deal validly with their principals in any case, except where there is the most entire good faith, and a full disclosure of all facts and circumstances, and an absence of all undue influence, advantage, or imposition.⁵

§ 316. Upon these principles, if an agent sells to his principal his own property, as the property of another, without disclosing the fact, the bargain, at the election of the principal, will be held void.⁶ So, if an agent, employed to purchase for another, purchases for himself, he will be considered as the trustee of his employer.⁷ Therefore, if a person is employed as an agent, to

¹ Cic. de Offic. Lib. 1, ch. 13; *Huguenin v. Baseley*, 14 Ves. 284.

² See *Neeley v. Anderson*, 2 Strobb. Eq. 262; *Brooke v. Berry*, 2 Gill, 83.

³ *Dunbar v. Tredennick*, 2 B. & Beatty, 319; *Norris v. Le Neve*, 3 Atk. 38.

⁴ See *Church v. Mar. Ins. Co.*, 1 Mason, 341; *Barker v. Mar. Ins. Co.*, 2 Mason, 369; *Woodhouse v. Meredith*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 204, 222; *Massey v. Davies*, 2 Ves. Jr. 318; *Crowe v. Ballard*, 3 Bro. Ch. 120; *Lees v. Nuttall*, 1 Russ. & Mylne, 53; s. c. 1 Tamlyn, 282.

⁵ See *Crowe v. Ballard*, 3 Bro. Ch. 117; *Purcell v. Macnamara*, 14 Ves. 91; *Huguenin v. Baseley*, 14 Ves. 273; *Watt v. Grove*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 492; *Fox v. Mackreth*, 2 Bro. Ch. 400; s. c. 2 Cox, 320; *Coles v. Trecothick*, 9 Ves. 246; *Lowther v. Lowther*, 13 Ves. 102, 103; *Selsey v. Rhoades*, 2 Sim. & Stu. 41; *Morret v. Paske*, 2 Atk. 53; *Green v. Winter*, 1 Johns. Ch. 27; *Parkist v. Alexander*, 1 Johns. Ch. 394. The case of *Gray v. Mansfield*, 1 Ves. 379, has been very justly doubted by Mr. Belt as not consistent with established principles. See Belt's Supplement, 167.

⁶ *Gillett v. Peppercorne*, 3 Beav. 78, 83, 84.

⁷ *Lees v. Nuttall*, 1 Russ. & M. 53; s. c. 1 Tamlyn, 282; *post*, § 327; *Taylor v. Salmon*, 2 Mees. & Cramp. 139; s. c. 4 Mylne & Craig, 139; *Torrey v. Bank of New Orleans*, 9 Paige, 649; *Van Epps v. Van Epps*, 9 Paige, 237;

purchase up a debt of his employer, he cannot purchase the debt upon his own account, for he is bound to purchase it at as low a rate as he can; and he would otherwise be tempted to violate his duty.¹ The same rule applies to a surety, who purchases up the debt of his principal. And, therefore, in each case, if a purchase is made of the debt, the agent or surety can entitle himself, as against his principal, to no more than he has actually paid for the debt.² So, if an agent discover a defect in the title of his principal to land, he cannot misuse it to acquire a title for himself; if he do, he will be held a trustee for his principal.³

§ 316 *a*. In all cases of purchases and bargains respecting property, directly and openly made between principals and agents, the utmost good faith is required. The agent must conceal no facts within his knowledge which might influence the judgment of his principal, as to the price or value; and, if he does, the contract will be set aside.⁴ The question in all such cases does not turn upon the point whether there is any intention to cheat or not; but upon the obligation, from the fiduciary relation of the parties, to make a frank and full disclosure.⁵ Of course, upon the principles already stated, if the relation of principal and agent has wholly ceased, the parties are restored to their common competency to deal with each other. It is also to be understood as a just qualification of the whole doctrine, that the principal may, at his election, deem the bargain made or act done by his agent valid or not; and that the agent cannot himself avoid it on that ground.⁶

§ 317. In the next place, as to the relation of guardian and ward. In this most important and delicate of trusts the same principles prevail, and with a larger and more comprehensive efficiency. It is obvious that, during the existence of the guardianship, the transactions of the guardian cannot be binding upon the ward, if they are of any disadvantage to him; and indeed, the relative situation of the parties imposes a general

Cram v. Mitchell, 1 Sandf. 251; *Dobson v. Racey*, 3 Sandf. 61; *Voorhees v. Presbyterian Church*, 8 Barbour, 136; *post*, § 1201 *a*, § 1211 *a*.

¹ *Reed v. Norris*, 2 Mylne & Craig. 361, 374.

² *Ibid*.

³ *Ringo v. Binns*, 10 Peters, 269.

⁴ *Farnam v. Brooks*, 9 Pick. 212.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ Story on Agency, § 210, and cases there cited.

inability to deal with each other.¹ But courts of equity proceed yet farther in cases of this sort. They will not permit transactions between guardians and wards to stand, even when they have occurred after the minority has ceased, and the relation become thereby actually ended, if the intermediate period be short,² unless the circumstances demonstrate, in the highest sense of the terms, the fullest deliberation on the part of the ward, and the most abundant good faith (*uberrima fides*) on the part of the guardian. For, in all such cases, the relation is still considered as having an undue influence upon the mind of the ward, and as virtually subsisting, especially if all the duties attached to the situation have not ceased; as, if the accounts between the parties have not been fully settled, or if the estate still remains in some sort under the control of the guardian.³

§ 318. Lord Hardwicke has expounded the general ground of this doctrine in a clear manner. "Where" (says he) "a man acts as a guardian, or trustee in nature of a guardian, for an infant, the court is extremely watchful to prevent that person's taking any advantage immediately upon his ward's coming of age, and at the time of settling accounts, or delivering up the trust; because an undue advantage may be taken. It would give an opportunity, either by flattery, or force, by good usage unfairly meant, or by bad usage imposed, to take such an advantage. And, therefore, the principle of the court is of the same nature with relief in this court on the head of public utility; as in bonds obtained from young heirs; and rewards given to an attorney pending a cause; and marriage-broking bonds. All depends upon public utility; and, therefore, the court will not suffer it, though, perhaps, in a particular instance, there may not be an actual unfairness."⁴ His lordship afterwards added: "The rule of the court, as to guardians, is extremely strict, and in some

¹ See 3 P. Will. 131, Cox's note (1); 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 12, note (k); 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 102, 103; *Dawson v. Massey*, 1 B. & Beatt. 226. See *Bostwick v. Atkins*, 3 Comst. 53; *Blackmore v. Shelby*, 8 Humph. 439.

² See *Richardson v. Linney*, 7 B. Monroe, 571; *Andrews v. Jones*, 10 Ala. 400.

³ *Dawson v. Massey*, 1 B. & Beatt. 229; *Wright v. Proud*, 13 Ves. 136; *Wedderburn v. Wedderburn*, 4 Mylne & Craig, 41.

⁴ *Hylton v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 548, 549; *Pierce v. Waring*, cited *ibid.* and in 1 Ves. 380; 1 P. Will. 120, Cox's note; 1 Cox, 125; *Wright v. Proud*, 13 Ves. 136, 138; *Wood v. Downes*, 18 Ves. 126.

cases does infer some hardship ; as, where there has been a great deal of trouble, and he has acted fairly and honestly, that yet he shall have no allowance. But the court has established, that on great utility, and on necessity, and on this principle of humanity, that it is a debt of humanity that one man owes to another ; as every man is liable to be in the same circumstances.”¹

§ 319. Lord Eldon has expressed himself even in a more emphatic manner on this subject. “There may not be” (says he) “a more moral act, one that would do more credit to a young man, beginning the world, or afford a better omen for the future, than, if a trustee having done his duty, the *cestui que trust*, taking into his fair, serious, and well-informed consideration, were to do an act of bounty like this. But the court cannot permit it, except quite satisfied that the act is of that nature, for the reason often given ; and recollecting, that, in discussing whether it is an act of rational consideration, an act of pure volition uninfluenced, that inquiry is so easily baffled in a court of justice, that instead of the spontaneous act of a friend uninfluenced, it may be the impulse of a mind misled by undue kindness, or forced by oppression ; and the difficulty of getting property out of the hands of the guardian or trustee thus increased. And, therefore, if the court does not watch these transactions with a jealousy almost invincible, in a great majority of cases, it will lend its assistance to fraud, where the connection is not dissolved, the account not settled, every thing remaining pressing upon the mind of the party under the care of the guardian or trustee.”² The same principles are applied to persons standing in the situation of *quasi* guardians or confidential advisers.³

§ 320. In the cases to which these principles have been applied, in order to set aside grants and other transactions between guardian and ward, two circumstances of great importance have generally concurred : first, that the grants and transactions have taken place immediately upon the ward's attaining age ; and, secondly, that the former influence of the guardian has been demonstrated to exist to an undue degree ; or, in other words, that the parties have not met upon equal terms.⁴ If, therefore, the relation

¹ *Hylton v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 548, 549.

² *Hatch v. Hatch*, 9 Ves. 297.

³ *Revett v. Harvey*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 502.

⁴ See *Dawson v. Massey*, 1 B. & Beatt. 229, 232, 236 ; *Aylward v. Kearney*, 2 B. & Beatt. 463.

has entirely ceased, not merely in name but in fact, and if sufficient time has elapsed to put the parties in complete independence as to each other; and if a full and fair settlement of all transactions growing out of the relation has been made, there is no objection to any bounty or grant conferred by the ward upon his guardian.¹ Indeed, in such cases, it is only the performance of a highly moral duty, recommended, as well by law as by natural justice.

§ 321. In the next place, with regard to the relation of trustee and *cestui que trust*, or rather beneficiary, or fide-commissary, as we could wish the person beneficially interested might be called, to escape from the awkwardness of a barbarous foreign idiom.² In this class of cases the same principles govern, as in cases of guardian and ward, with at least as much enlarged liberality of application, and upon grounds quite as comprehensive. Indeed, the cases are usually treated as if they were identical.³ A trustee is never permitted to partake of the bounty of the party for whom he acts, except under circumstances which would make the same valid, if it were a case of guardianship. A trustee cannot purchase of his *cestui que trust*, unless under like circumstances; or, to use the expressive language of an eminent judge, a trustee may purchase of his *cestui que trust*, provided there is a distinct

¹ *Hylton v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 547, 549.

² The phrase *cestui que trust* is a barbarous Norman law French phrase; and is so ungainly and ill adapted to the English idiom, that it is surprising that the good sense of the English legal profession has not long since banished it, and substituted some phrase in the English idiom, furnishing an analogous meaning. In the Roman law the trustee was commonly called *hæres fiduciarius*; and the *cestui que trust*, *hæres fidei-commissarius*, which Dr. Halifax has not scrupled to translate *fide-committee* (Halifax, Anal. of Civil Law, ch. 6, § 16, p. 34; id. ch. 8, § 2, 3, p. 45, 46). I prefer fide-commissary, as at least equally within the analogy of the English language. But beneficiary, though a little remote from the original meaning of the word, would be a very appropriate word, as it has not, as yet, acquired any general use in a different sense. *Hæres fidei commissarius* was sometimes used in the civil law, to denote the trustee. See *Vicat, Vocab. voce fidei commissarius*. The French law calls the *cestui que trust*, *fidei commissaire*. See Ferriere Dict. voce, *fidei commissaire*. Merlin, Répertoire, voce, *substitution, et substitution fidei commissaire*. Dr. Brown uses the word, fidei commissary, 1 Brown, Civil Law, 190, note.

³ *Hatch v. Hatch*, 9 Ves. 292, 296, 297; Newland on Contracts, ch. 32, p. 459, &c.; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, p. 142, &c.; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 12, note (k); *Farnam v. Brooks*, 9 Pick. 212. See also *Bulkley v. Wilford*, 2 Clark & Finn. 102, 177 to 183; *ante*, § 317, 320.

and clear contract, ascertained to be such,¹ after a jealous and scrupulous examination of all the circumstances; and it is clear, that the *cestui que trust* intended that the trustee should buy; and there is no fraud, no concealment, and no advantage taken by the trustee of information, acquired by him as trustee.² But it is difficult to make out such a case, where the exception is taken, especially where there is any inadequacy of price or any inequality in the bargain.³ And therefore, if a trustee, though strictly honest, should buy for himself an estate of his *cestui que trust*, and then should sell it for more, according to the rules of a court of equity, from general policy, and not from any peculiar imputation of fraud, he would be held still to remain a trustee to all intents and purposes, and not to be permitted to sell to or for himself.⁴

§ 322. But we are not to understand, from this last language, that, to entitle the *cestui que trust* to relief, it is indispensable to show that the trustee has made some advantage, where there has been a purchase by himself; and that, unless some advantage has been made, the sale to the trustee is good. That would not be putting the doctrine upon its true ground, which is, that the prohibition arises from the subsisting relation of trusteeship.⁵ The ingredient of advantage made by him would only go to establish, that the transaction might be open to the strong imputation of being tainted by imposition or selfish cunning.⁶ But the principle

¹ See *Dobson v. Racey*, 3 Sandf. 61; *Brackenridge v. Holland*, 2 Blackf. 377; *Poillon v. Martin*, 1 Sandf. 569; *Stuart v. Kissam*, 2 Barb. 494.

² See *Brannan v. Oliver*, 2 Stuart, 47; *Julian v. Reynolds*, 8 Alabama, 680; *Stallings v. Freeman*, 2 Hill, Ch. 401; *Pratt v. Thornton*, 28 Maine, 335. But see *McCartney v. Calhoun*, 17 Ala. 301; *Marshall v. Stevens*, 8 Humph. 159; *Beeson v. Beeson*, 9 Barr, 279; *McKinley v. Irvine*, 13 Ala. 681.

³ *Ante*, § 310; *Coles v. Trecothick*, 9 Ves. 246; *Fox v. Mackreth*, 2 Bro. Ch. 400; *Gibson v. Jeyes*, 6 Ves. 277; *Whichcote v. Lawrence*, 3 Ves. 740; *Campbell v. Walker*, 5 Ves. 678; *Ayliffe v. Murray*, 2 Atk. 59; *Hawley v. Cramer*, 4 Cowen, 717; *Van Epps v. Van Epps*, 9 Paige, 237; *Scott v. Davis*, 4 Mylne & Craig, 87.

⁴ See *Fox v. Mackreth*, 2 Brown, Ch. 400; s. c. 1 Cox, 310, 317; *Prevost v. Gratz*, 1 Peters, Cir. 367, 368; s. c. 6 Wheat. 481; *Hamilton v. Wright*, 6 Clark & Finnell, 111, 133; *Edward v. Meyrick*, 2 Hare, 60, 68; *Hawley v. Cramer*, 4 Cowen, 717. *Quære*, does the doctrine extend to all purchases made by a trustee from the *cestui que trust*, or is it limited to purchases of the trust estate?

⁵ See *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 32, p. 461; *Ex parte Lacey*, 6 Ves. 625, 626; 1 *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 92, 93; *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 138.

⁶ See *Campbell v. Walker*, 5 Ves. 678; 13 Ves. 601.

applies, however innocent the purchase may be in a given case.¹ It is poisonous in its consequences. The *cestui que trust* is not bound to prove, nor is the court bound to decide, that the trustee has made a bargain advantageous to himself. The fact may be so; and yet the party not have it in his power distinctly and clearly to show it. There may be fraud; and yet the party not be able to show it. It is to guard against this uncertainty and hazard of abuse, and to remove the trustee from temptation, that the rule does and will permit the *cestui que trust* to come at his own option, and, without showing essential injury, to insist upon having the experiment of another sale.² So that in fact, in all cases where a purchase has been made by a trustee on his own account of the estate of his *cestui que trust*, although sold at public auction, it is in the option of the *cestui que trust* to set aside the sale, whether *bonâ fide* made or not.³ So a trustee will not be permitted to obtain any profit or advantage to himself in managing the concerns of the *cestui que trust*, but whatever benefits or profits are obtained will belong exclusively to the *cestui que trust*.⁴ In short, it may be laid down as a general rule, that a trustee is bound not to do any thing which can place him in a position inconsistent with the interests of the trust, or which have a tendency to interfere with his duty in discharging it.⁵ And this doctrine applies, not only to trustees strictly so called, but to other persons standing in like situation; such as assignees and solicitors of a bankrupt or insolvent estate, who are never permitted to become purchasers at the sale of the bankrupt or insolvent estate.⁶ It applies in like manner to executors and administrators, who are not permitted to purchase up

¹ *Ex parte James*, 8 Ves. 337, 345; *Ex parte Bennett*, 10 Ves. 381, 385; *Cane v. Lord Allen*, 2 Dow, 289, 299; *Dobson v. Racey*, 3 Sandf. 61; *Slade v. Van Vetchen*, 11 Paige, 21; *ante*, § 311.

² *Davoue v. Fanning*, 2 Johns. Ch. 252, where Mr. Chancellor Kent has examined the cases with a most exemplary diligence. *Ex parte Bennett*, 10 Ves. 381, 385, 386; *ante*, § 311; *Michaud v. Girod*, 4 Howard, Sup. Ct. 503.

³ *Campbell v. Walker*, 5 Ves. 678, 680; 13 Ves. 601; *Ex parte Lacey*, 6 Ves. 625; *Ex parte Bennett*, 10 Ves. 381, 385, 386; *Morse v. Royal*, 12 Ves. 355; *Whitcomb v. Minchin*, 5 Mad. 91; *Belt's Supplement*, p. 11, 12.

⁴ *Saagar v. Wilson*, 4 Serg. & Watts, 102.

⁵ *Hamilton v. Wright*, 9 Clark & Finnell. 111, 123.

⁶ *Ex parte Lacey*, 6 Ves. 625; *Ex parte James*, 8 Ves. 337; *Ex parte Bennett*, 10 Ves. 381; *Davoue v. Fanning*, 2 Johns. Ch. 252; *Lady Ormond v. Hutchinson*, 13 Ves. 47; *Harrison v. Monk*, 10 Ala. 185; *Cram v. Mitchell*, 1 Sandf. Ch. 251; *Farnam v. Brooks*, 9 Pick. 212.

the debts of the deceased on their own account; but, whatever advantage is thus derived by them, by purchases at an undue value, is for the common benefit of the estate.¹ Indeed, the doctrine may be more broadly stated; that executors or administrators will not be permitted, under any circumstances,² to derive a personal benefit from the manner in which they transact the business, or manage the assets, of the estate.³ And if a trustee misapply the funds of his *cestui que trust* or beneficiary, and purchase a judgment or other security therewith, the latter has an election to take such judgment or security, or to call upon the trustee to make good the original fund.⁴

[* § 322 a. And where the *cestuis que trust*, after they come of age, or in any other mode competent to release the previous defaults of the trustees, do any act which would ordinarily have that effect, between other parties, it will not be so regarded, unless the trustees had fully informed the *cestuis que trust* of their rights, or they acted under full knowledge of the liability of the trustees.⁵ But where the *cestui que trust*, knowing all the facts, has for a long time acquiesced in an improper investment of the fund, the trustees will not be made chargeable with any unexpected loss subsequently occurring.⁶ And the same rule applies, where the contract of sale is made between the directors of different corporations, the persons acting on behalf of one board having an interest in the other company.⁷]

¹ *Ex parte Lacey*, 6 Ves. 628; *Ex parte James*, 8 Ves. 346; *Green v. Winter*, 1 Johns. Ch. 27; *Forbes v. Ross*, 2 Bro. Ch. 430; *Hawley v. Mancius*, 7 Johns. Ch. 174. ² *Green v. Sargent*, 23 Verm. 466.

³ *Schieffelin v. Stewart*, 1 Johns. Ch. 620; *Brown v. Brewerton*, 4 Johns. Ch. 303; 4 Dow, Parl. 131; *Evertson v. Tappen*, 5 Johns. Ch. 497; *Hawley v. Mancius*, 7 Johns. Ch. 174; *Cook v. Coolingridge*, Jac. 607, 621; *Ward v. Smith*, 3 Sandf. 592; *Michaud v. Girod*, 4 How. U. S. 504; *Painter v. Henderson*, 7 Barr, 48; *Jeremy on Equity Jurisd.* B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, p. 142, &c.; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 7, § 6, note (*p*); *id.* § 7, and note (*r*). Trustees are not voluntarily allowed a compensation in England for their services, unless specially provided for in the creation of the trust; but their duties and services are treated as gratuitous and honorary. A different rule prevails in many, if not all, of the States of this Union. See *post*, § 1268.

⁴ *Steele v. Babcock*, 1 Hill (N. Y.), 527.

⁵ [* *Burrows v. Walls*, 5 De Gex, M. & G. 233. See also *Lloyd v. Atwood*, 3 De Gex & Jones, 614.

⁶ *Griffiths v. Porter*, 25 Beavan, 236; *Liddell v. Norton*, 21 Beavan, 183; *West v. Sloan*, 3 Jones, Eq. 102.

⁷ *Cumberland Coal & Iron Co. v. Sherman*, 8 Law Reg. 333. In South Car-

§ 323. There are many other cases of persons, standing, in regard to each other, in the like confidential relations, in which similar principles apply. Among these may be enumerated the cases which arise from the relation of landlord and tenant, of partner and partner, of principal and surety, and various others, where mutual agencies, rights, and duties are created between the parties by their own voluntary acts, or by operation of law. But it would occupy too much space to go over them at large; and most of them are resolvable into the principles already commented on.¹ On the whole, the doctrine may be generally stated that wherever confidence is reposed, and one party has it in his power, in a secret manner, for his own advantage, to sacrifice those interests which he is bound to protect, he will not be permitted to hold any such advantage.²

§ 324. The case of principal and surety, however, as a striking illustration of this doctrine, may be briefly referred to. The contract of surety imports entire good faith and confidence between the parties in regard to the whole transaction. Any concealment of material facts, or any express or implied misrepresentation of such facts, or any undue advantage taken of the surety by the creditor, either by surprise, or by withholding proper information, will undoubtedly furnish a sufficient ground to invalidate the contract. Upon the same ground, the creditor is, in all subsequent transactions with the debtor, bound to equal good faith to the surety.³ If any stipulations, therefore, are made between the creditor and the debtor, which are not communicated to the surety, and are inconsistent with the terms of his contract, or are preju-

olins the courts of equity, after a good deal of vacillation, in *Stallings v. Foreman*, 2 Hill, Ch. 401, held that an executor or administrator is not to be regarded as a mere trustee to sell, and that his purchase at his own sale, at a fair price, is valid, both in law and equity. The legislature then established the same rule by statute. *Huger v. Huger*, 9 Rich. Eq. 217, 224, 225.]

¹ See 1 *Hovenden on Frauds*, ch. 6, p. 199, 209; *id.* vol. 2, ch. 20, p. 153, ch. 21, p. 171; *Maddeford v. Austwick*, 1 Sim. 89; 1 *Chitty, Dig. Fraud*, vii.; *Oliver v. Court*, 8 Price, 127; *Farnam v. Brooks*, 9 Pick. 212.

² *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 2, p. 395; *Griffiths v. Robins*, 3 Mad. 191. See *Burke v. Rogerson*, 12 Jur. N. S. 635; s. c. 14 L. T. N. S. 780.

³ See *Cecil v. Plaistow*, 1 Anstr. 202; *Leicester v. Rose*, 4 East, 372; *Pidcock v. Bishop*, 3 B. & Cressw. 605; *Owen v. Homan*, 3 Eng. Law & Eq. 121; *Smith v. Bank of Scotland*, 1 Dow, 272; *Bank of United States v. Etting*, 11 Wheat. 59.

dicial to his interests therein, they will operate as a virtual discharge of the surety from the obligation of his contract.¹ And, on the other hand, if any stipulations for additional security, or other advantages, are obtained between the creditor and the debtor, the surety is entitled to the fullest benefit of them.²

§ 325. Indeed, the proposition may be stated in a more general form; that if a creditor does any act injurious to the surety, or inconsistent with his rights, or if he omits to do any act, when required by the surety, which his duty enjoins him to do, and the omission proves injurious to the surety; in all such cases the latter will be discharged, and he may set up such conduct as a defence to any suit brought against him, if not at law, at all events in equity.³

[* § 325 a. But where an official bond is given for faithful administration, nominally to one of the officers of court, but in fact for the security of parties interested in the discharge of the official duty thereby insured, it was held that the surety on such bond is not discharged by the neglect of those interested to exercise that supervision over the official conduct of the principal which it was, by statute, made their duty to do. In order to have that effect, it would seem, that the negligence must amount to a virtual connivance at the official delinquency; or must be so gross, as to be equivalent to a wilful shutting of the eyes to the fraud about to be committed. But this case rests upon grounds somewhat peculiar.⁴ It is now regarded as settled that there must be something which

¹ See *King v. Baldwin*, 2 Johns. Ch. 554, and the cases there cited; s. c. 17 Johns. 384; *Bonar v. Macdonald*, 1 Eng. Law & Eq. 1; *Nisbet v. Smith*, 2 Bro. Ch. 583.

² *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 123; *Mayhew v. Crickett*, 2 Swanst. 186, and the authorities cited, p. 191, note (a); *Boulbce v. Stubbs*, 18 Ves. 23; *Ex parte Rushforth*, 10 Ves. 409, 421; *post*, § 499.

³ The proposition is thus qualified, because in a variety of cases it is certainly very questionable whether the defence can be asserted at law; though there is no doubt that it can be asserted in all cases in equity. It has, indeed, been said, by a learned court, that there is nothing in the nature of a defence by a surety, to make it peculiarly a subject of equity jurisdiction; and that, whatever would exonerate a surety in one court, ought to exonerate him in the other. *The People v. Janssen*, 7 Johns. 332; s. p. 2 Johns. 554, 557. But this doctrine does not seem to be universally adopted; and certainly it has not been acted upon in England to the extent which its terms seem to import. See *Theobald on Principal and Surety*, p. 117 to 138.

⁴ [* *Dawson v. Lawes, Kay*, 280; *ante*, § 164 a. .

amounts to fraud to enable the surety to say that he is released from his contract on account of misrepresentation or concealment. But in regard to his being released by the surrender of securities held by the creditor, there is no difference whether they existed at the date of the suretyship or not.^{1]}

§ 326. It is upon this ground, that if a creditor, without any communication with the surety, and assent on his part, should afterwards enter into any new contract with the principal, inconsistent with the former contract, or should stipulate, in a binding manner, upon a sufficient consideration, for further delay and postponement of the day of payment of the debt, that will operate in equity as a discharge of the surety.² [* But it is not every alteration of his position by the act of the creditor, which will discharge the surety. To have this effect, the alteration must be such as interferes for a time with his remedies against the principal debtor.³ And where the creditor, in making the arrangement with the principal to give time, or otherwise vary the strict enforcement of the letter of the contract, reserves his rights against the surety, although without communicating this fact to the surety, it will not operate as a release of the surety.^{4]} But there is no positive duty incumbent on the creditor, to prosecute measures of active diligence; and, therefore, mere delay on his part (at least if some other equity does not interfere), unaccompanied by any valid con-

¹ *Pledge v. Buss*, 6 Jur. n. s. 695. The case of *Newton v. Chorlton*, 10 Hare, 646, is treated as overruled. *Post*, § 499. And where the consideration of the contract, guaranteed by the surety, was the purchase of real estate, the title to which was subsequently found defective, and the defect supplied by the vendor, without the knowledge of the surety, but by consent of the principal; it was held the surety was not discharged. *Campbell v. Moulton*, 30 Vt. 667.]

² *Skip v. Huey*, 3 Atk. 91; *Boulton v. Stubbins*, 18 Ves. 20; *Ludlow v. Simond*, 2 Caines, Cas. Err. 1; *King v. Baldwin*, 2 Johns. Ch. 554; 17 Johns. 384; *Ex parte Gifford*, 6 Ves. 805; *Rees v. Berrington*, 2 Ves. Jr. 540; 2 *White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas.* 707, and notes; *Blake v. White*, 1 *Younge & Coll.* 420. *Quære*, whether a surety on a bond for the fidelity of a party for an indefinite period can, by notice to the obligee, terminate his liability. See *Gordon v. Calvert*, 2 Sim. 253; s. c. 4 Russ. 581; *Bonser v. Cox*, 6 Beavan, 379.

³ [* *Tucker v. Laing*, 2 Kay & J. 745.

⁴ *Webb v. Hewitt*, 3 Kay & J. 338. But it is here said, if the creditor release the debtor he cannot reserve any right against the surety, for the debt is gone. And in equity, a composition by the debtor, effected with all his creditors, by the surrender of all his property, operates as a release, and no rights can be reserved against the surety. *Id.*; *Kearsley v. Cole*, 16 M. & W. 128.]

tract for such delay, will not amount to laches, so as to discharge the surety.¹ On the other hand, if the creditor has any security from the debtor, and he parts with it, without communication with the surety, or by his gross negligence it is lost,² that will operate at least to the value of the security, to discharge the surety.³ [* And even where done under a misapprehension, the consequences must fall upon the person who did the act.⁴]

§ 327. Sureties, also, are entitled to come into a court of equity, after a debt has become due, to compel the debtor to exonerate them from their liability, by paying the debt.⁵ And although (as we have seen) the creditor is not bound by his general duty to active diligence in collecting the debt, yet it has been said that a surety, when the debt has become due, may come into equity, and compel the creditor to sue for, and collect the debt from the principal; at least if he will indemnify the creditor against the risk, delay, and expense of the suit.⁶ But, whether the surety can thus compel the creditor to sue the principal, or not, he has a clear right, upon paying the debt to the principal, to be substituted in the place of the creditor, as to all securities, held by the latter for the debt, and to have the same benefit that he would have therein.⁷

¹ *Wright v. Simpson*, 6 Ves. 734; *Heath v. Hay*, 1 Y. & Jerv. 434; *United States v. Kirkpatrick*, 9 Wheat. 720; *McLemore v. Powell*, 12 Wheat. 554; *Josslyn v. Smith*, 13 Vt. 353.

² [But see *Lang v. Brevard*, 3 Strobb. Eq. 59, where it was held that the neglect of the creditor to record a mortgage given by the principal debtor, to recover the debt, did not discharge the surety. See also *Pickens v. Finney*, 12 S. & M. 468.]

³ *Mayhew v. Crickett*, 2 Swanst. 185, 191, and note (a); *Law v. East India Company*, 4 Ves. 833; *Capel v. Butler*, 2 Sim. & Stu. 457. See also *Schroepell v. Shaw*, 3 Comst. 460.

⁴ [* Lord Eldon, in *Wilson, ex parte*, 11 Vesey, 410. In *Scholefield v. Templer*, Johns. Eng. Ch. 155, the vice-chancellor, in commenting upon this case, says: "I do not see that the statement of the facts of the case fits the reasons for the judgment." But if we correctly understand the comments of Lord Eldon, the misapprehension of the proper relation of his reasons to the judgment is not justly laid to his charge.]

⁵ *Nisbet v. Smith*, 2 Bro. Ch. 579; *Lee v. Brook*, Moseley, 318; *Cox v. Tyson*, 1 Turn. & Russ. 395.

⁶ *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 123, 131, 132; *King v. Baldwin*, 2 Johns. Ch. 554; s. c. 17 Johns. 384; *Wright v. Simpson*, 6 Ves. 734; *Bishop v. Day*, 13 Vt. 81; [* *Gilliam v. Esselman*, 5 Sneed, 86.]

⁷ See *Craythorne v. Swinburne*, 14 Ves. 162; *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 12, 22; *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 123. [* See 3 Equity Lead. Cas. 557-559.]

This, however, is not the place to consider at large the general rights and duties of persons standing in the relation of creditors, debtors, and sureties; and we shall have occasion again to advert to the subject, when considering the marshalling of securities in favor of sureties.¹

[* § 327 *a*. Contracts of suretyship limited by time are usually construed strictly, and not extended beyond the period fixed, even when the creditors and the principal extend the same relation. Thus, where two bankers carried on business under articles of partnership, providing that if, at the end of five years, the term fixed, either partner should wish to carry on the business, and should not take the share of the other at a valuation, the assets should be realized and debts paid, and the surplus divided; and one of the partners had procured a surety to indemnify the other against all loss in respect of the partnership, the business of the bank having been continued by the firm more than a year after the expiration of the five years: it was held that the surety was thereby discharged; and that, whether these facts would constitute a defence at law or not, a court of equity would restrain the obligee from proceeding in such an action.²]

§ 328. Let us now pass to the consideration of the third class of constructive frauds, combining, in some degree, the ingredients of the others, but prohibited mainly, because they unconscionably compromise, or injuriously affect, the private rights, interests, or duties of the parties themselves, or operate substantially as frauds upon the private rights, interests, duties, or intentions of third persons.

§ 329. With regard to this last class, much that has been already stated, under the preceding head of positive or actual fraud, as to unconscionable advantages, overreaching, imposition, undue influence, and fiduciary situations, may well be applied here, although certainly with diminished force, as the remarks there made did not turn exclusively upon constructive fraud.

[* § 329 *a*. Where the contract is between those who sustain, or have lately sustained, any intimate and confidential relation, the law presumes the existence of that superiority and influence on

¹ *Post*, § 499, 502, 637.

² [* *Small v. Currie*, 5 De G., M. & G. 141. See also *Watson v. Allcock*, 4 De G., M. & G. 242; *Bonar v. Macdonald*, 3 H. L. Cases, 226; *Railton v. Mathews*, 10 Clark & Finell. n. s. 934.

the one part, and that confidence and dependence on the other, which is the natural result of the relation, and will accordingly decree the cancellation of the contract, unless it appear affirmatively to have been equal and just. But if there be nothing in the relation tending to show influence on the one part and dependence on the other, it may nevertheless be shown, that confidence existed and was betrayed, and the court will regard it the same as if it grew out of a special relation.¹

§ 329 *b.* And where one sustains any such fiduciary obligation to another, that such other is fairly entitled to his advice and services, either for the joint benefit of the two, or the exclusive benefit of himself, and the party sustaining such relation, in violation of his obligation and duty, enters into any subsidiary contract, with a view to his own advantage, all profits thus resulting belong to the party for whose benefit he was bound to have acted. Thus where one, who was both solicitor for and partner in a concern, entered into a contract with a third party to sell land to the concern, at an advance above his purchase, and divide the profits between them, and this was done without the knowledge of the company, it was held that the share of the profits thus secured to the solicitor and partner belonged to the company, and it was decreed accordingly.²

§ 329 *c.* But in a recent case³ carried to the court of final resort, it was held, that a bill to set aside a purchase by an agent should be dismissed with costs, it being proved, that the plaintiff, at the time of the sale, had distinct notice that the agent was one of the beneficial purchasers, and not having instituted a suit for six years.]

§ 330. To this same class may also be referred many of the cases arising under the Statute of Frauds,⁴ which requires certain

¹ [* *Smith v. Kay*, 7 House of Lords Cas. 750. It is the duty of the defendant standing in the relation of superiority to plaintiff, and charged with obtaining an unjust advantage by means of undue influence, to show affirmatively, as far as practicable, that such was not the fact. *Davies v. Davies*, 9 Jur. n. s. 1002; s. c. 4 Giff. 417; s. c. 11 W. R. 1040; s. c. 9 L. T., n. s. 162; *Dally v. Wonham*, 33 Beav. 154.

² *Tyrrell v. The Bank of London*, 8 Jur. n. s. 849; s. c. 31 L. J., n. s. Ch. 369; s. c. 10 W. R. 359; *Broun v. Kennedy*, 9 Jur. n. s. 1163; s. c. 33 L. J. n. s. Ch. 71; s. c. 12 W. R. 224; s. c. 33 Beav. 133.

³ *Wentworth v. Lloyd*, 32 Beav. 467; s. c. 10 House of Lords Cas. 589.]

⁴ Stat. 29 Charles II. ch. 3, § 1, 4.

contracts to be in writing, in order to give them validity. In the construction of that statute, a general principle has been adopted, that, as it is designed as a protection against fraud, it shall never be allowed to be set up as a protection and support of fraud. Hence, in a variety of cases, where from fraud, imposition, or mistake, a contract of this sort has not been reduced to writing, but has been suffered to rest in confidence or in parol communications between the parties, courts of equity will enforce it against the party, guilty of a breach of confidence, who attempts to shelter himself behind the provisions of the statute.¹ Some instances of this sort have been already mentioned; and others again will occur in the subsequent pages.²

§ 331. And, here, we may apply the remark, that the proper jurisdiction of courts of equity is to take every one's act, according to conscience, and not to suffer undue advantage to be taken of the strict forms of law, or of positive rules.³ Hence it is, that, even if there be no proof of fraud or imposition; yet, if upon the whole circumstances, the contract appears to be grossly against conscience, or grossly unreasonable and oppressive, courts of equity will sometimes interfere and grant relief;⁴ although they certainly are very cautious of interfering, unless upon very strong circumstances.⁵ But the mere fact that the bargain is a very hard or unreasonable one, is not, generally, sufficient, *per se*, to induce these courts to interfere.⁶ And indeed it will be found that there are

¹ See 3 Wooddes. Lect. 57, p. 431, 432; *Montecute v. Maxwell*, 1 P. Will. 619, 620; 1 Eq. Abridg. 19; *Attorney General v. Sitwell*, 1 Younge & Coll. 583; *ante*, § 157, 161, and note.

² *Ante*, § 158; *post*, § 374, 752 to 766.

³ *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 137, *arguendo*.

⁴ *Nott v. Hill*, 1 Vern. 167, 211; s. c. 2 Vern. 26; *Berny v. Pitt*, 2 Vern. 14; *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 145, 148, 154, 155, 158; *Twistleton v. Griffith*, 1 P. Will. 310; *Cole v. Gibbons*, 3 P. Will. 290; *Bowes v. Heaps*, 3 Ves. & B. 117; *Gwynne v. Heaton*, 1 Bro. Ch. 1; *Collins v. Hare*, 2 Bligh, 106, n. s.

⁵ In some cases of grossly unreasonable contracts, relief may be had, even at law; as in the case of a contract to pay for a horse a barley-corn a nail, doubling it every nail, and there were thirty-two nails in the shoes of the horse. *James v. Morgan*, 1 Lev. 111, cited 2 Ves. 155; 1 Atk. 351, 352; *Whalley v. Whalley*, 3 Bligh, 1.

⁶ *Willis v. Jernegan*, 2 Atk. 251, 252. See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 10, and note (*h*); *Proof v. Hines*, Cas. T. Talb. 111; *Ramsbottom v. Parker*, 6 Maddock, 5; 2 Swanston, 147, note (*a*), and especially under page 150, the Re-

very few cases not infected with positive or actual fraud, in which they do interfere, except where the parties stand in some very peculiar predicament, and, in some sort, under the protection of the law, from age, or character, or relationship.¹

§ 332. One of the most striking cases, in which the courts interfere, is in favor of a very gallant, but strangely improvident class of men, who seem to have mixed up in their character qualities of very opposite natures, and who seem, from their habits, to require guardianship during the whole course of their lives; having at the same time great generosity, credulity, extravagance, heedlessness, and bravery. Of course it will be at once understood, that we here speak of common sailors, in the mercantile and naval service. Courts of equity are always supposed to take an indulgent consideration of their interests, and to treat them in the same light with which young heirs and expectants are regarded. Hence it is, that contracts of seamen respecting their wages and prize-money are watched with great jealousy, and are generally relievable whenever any inequality appears in the bargain, or any undue advantage has been taken.² It has been remarked, by a learned judge, that this title to relief arises from a general head of equity, partly on account of the persons with whom the transaction is had, and partly on account of the value of the thing purchased.³ And, he added, that he was warranted in saying, that they were to be viewed in as favorable a light as young heirs are, by what has been often said in cases of this kind, and what has been done by the legislature itself, which has considered them as a class of men, loose, and

porter's citation from Lord Nottingham's MS. of the case of *Berny v. Pitt*, and the remarks of Lord Hardwicke on this case, in 1 Atk. 352, and 2 Ves. 157; *Freeman v. Bishop*, 2 Atk. 39.

¹ See *Huguenin v. Baseley*, 14 Ves. 271. And see Mr. Swanston's valuable note to *Davis v. Duke of Marlborough*, 2 Swanst. 149, note (a); *Jeremy on Equity Jurisd. B. 2, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 4, p. 399*; *Thornhill v. Evans*, 2 Atk. 330.

² See the authorities on the subject of contracts with seamen, fully collected in the work on Contracts, by Prof. Parsons, Vol. 1.

³ Sir Thomas Clarke, in *How v. Weldon*, 2 Ves. 516, 518; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 12, note (k); *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 1, p. 401*; 3 P. Will. 131, Cox's note (1); *Taylor v. Rochford*, 2 Ves. 281; *Baldwin v. Rochford*, 1 Wils. 229. Yet it is obvious, that Lord Hardwicke, in *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. Sen. 137, did not contemplate them as entitled to such peculiar protection; for he puts their case as not relievable. "The contracts of sailors, selling their shares before they knew what they were, could not be set aside here." But see the cases in 1 Wilson, 229; 2 Ves. 218.

anthinking, who will, almost for nothing, part with what they have acquired, perhaps, with their blood.¹

§ 333. But the great class of cases, in which relief is granted, under this head, is where the contract or other act is substantially a fraud upon the rights, interests, duties, or intentions of third persons. And, here, the general rule is, that particular persons, in contracts, and other acts, shall not only transact *bonâ fide* between themselves, but shall not transact *malâ fide* in respect to other persons, who stand in such a relation to either, as to be affected by the contract or the consequences of it.² And, as the rest of mankind, besides the parties contracting, are concerned, the rule is properly said to be governed by public utility.³

§ 334. It is upon this ground, that relief has been constantly granted, in what are called catching bargains with heirs, reversioners, and expectants, during the life of their parents or other ancestors.⁴ Many, and, indeed, most of these cases (as has been pointedly remarked by Lord Hardwicke), “ have been mixed cases, compounded of almost every species of fraud; there being sometimes proof of actual fraud, which is always decisive. There is always fraud presumed or inferred from the circumstances or conditions of the parties contracting, from weakness on one side and usury on the other, or extortion or advantage taken of that weakness. There has always been an appearance of fraud from the nature of the bargain, even if there be no proof of any circumvention, but merely from the intrinsic unconscionableness of the bargain. In most of these cases have concurred deceit and illusion on other persons, not privy to the fraudulent agreement. The father, ancestor, or relation from whom was the expectation of the estate, has been kept in the dark. The heir or expectant has been kept from disclosing his circumstances, and resorting to them for advice, which might have tended to his relief, and also reformation. This misleads the ancestor, who has been seduced to leave

¹ *How v. Weldon*, 2 Ves. Sen. 516. See also the admirable opinion of Lord Stowell, in the *Juliana*, 2 Hagg. Adm. 504. But see *Griffith v. Spratley*, 1 Cox, 383.

² Per Lord Hardwicke, in *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 156, 157.

³ *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 156, 157; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 97, 98, 99, 214; 1 Eq. Abridg. 90, &c.

⁴ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 12, and note (*k*); Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3 Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 4, p. 397, &c.; *Davis v. Duke of Marlborough*, 2 Swanst. 147, 151, 152, 165, 174.

his estate, not to his heir or family, but to a set of artful persons, who have divided the spoil beforehand.”¹

§ 335. Strong as this language may appear, it is fully borne out by the general complexion of the cases in which relief has been afforded. Actual fraud, indeed, has not unfrequently been repelled.² But there has always been constructive fraud, the nature and circumstances of the transaction being an imposition and deceit upon third persons, who were not parties to it. The relief is founded in part upon the policy of maintaining parental and *quasi* parental authority, and preventing the waste of family estates. It is also founded in part upon an enlarged equity, flowing from the principles of natural justice; upon the equity of protecting heedless and necessitous persons against the designs of that calculating rapacity which the law constantly discountenances; of succoring the distress frequently incident to the owners of unprofitable reversions, and of guarding against the improvidence with which men are commonly disposed to sacrifice the future to the present, especially when young, rash, and dissolute.³

§ 336. Indeed, in cases of this sort, courts of equity have extended a degree of protection to the parties, approaching to an incapacity to bind themselves absolutely by any contract, and, as it were, reducing them to the situation of infants, in order to guard them against the effects of their own conduct.⁴ Hence it is, that, in all cases of this sort, it is incumbent upon the party dealing with the heir, or expectant, or reversioner, to establish, not merely that there is no fraud, but (as the phrase is) to make good the bargain; that is, to show that a fair and adequate consideration has been paid.⁵ For, in cases of this sort (contrary to

¹ Lord Hardwicke, in *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 157; *Earl of Aldborough v. Frye*, 7 Clark & Finnell. 436.

² *Bowes v. Heaps*, 3 Ves. & Beam. 117, 119; *Peacock v. Evans*, 16 Ves. 512.

³ See *Davis v. Duke of Marlborough*, 2 Swanston, 147, 148, the Reporter's note; *Twistleton v. Griffith*, 1 P. Will. 310; *Cole v. Gibbons*, 3 P. Will. 293; *Baugh v. Price*, 1 Wils. 320; 2 Ves. 144, 155; *Barnardiston v. Lingood*, 2 Atk. 135, 136; *Bowes v. Heaps*, 3 Ves. & Beam. 117, 119, 120; *Walmesley v. Booth*, 2 Atk. 27, 28; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 97, 98, 99.

⁴ *Gwynne v. Heaton*, 1 Bro. Ch. 1, 9; *Peacock v. Evans*, 16 Ves. 512, 514.

⁵ *Earl of Aldborough v. Frye*, 7 Clark & Finnell. 436, 456. In this case Lord Cottenham said: "It appears to be established by several cases that where a party deals with an expectant heir, the *onus* is upon him to show that he gave a fair price."

the general rule), mere inadequacy of price or compensation is sufficient to set aside the contract.¹ The relief is granted upon the general principle of mischief to the public, without requiring any particular evidence of imposition, unless the contract is shown to be above all exception.² But it is not necessary, in cases of this sort, to establish in evidence that the full value of the reversionary interest or other expectancy has been given, according to the ordinary table for calculations of this sort. It will be sufficient to make the purchase unimpeachable, if a fair price, or the fair market-price, be given therefor, at the time of the dealing.³

§ 337. The doctrine applies, as we have seen, not merely to heirs dealing with their expectancies, but to reversioners and remainder-men, dealing with property already vested in them, but of which the enjoyment is future, and is, therefore, apt to be under-estimated by the giddy, the necessitous, the improvident, and the young.⁴ According, however, to the decisions, age does not seem to make much difference as to the protection afforded to expectant heirs, since the aim of the rule is chiefly directed to prevent deceit and imposition upon parents and other ancestors.⁵ And in regard to reversioners and remainder-men, if they are at the time necessitous, and laboring under pecuniary distress and embarrassment, an equally indulgent protection will also be afforded to them.⁶

¹ *Peacock v. Evans*, 16 Ves. 512, 514; *Gowland v. De Faria*, 17 Ves. 20; *Bernal v. Donegal*, 1 Bligh (N. S.), 594; *Hincksman v. Smith*, 3 Russ. 433; *Earl of Aldborough v. Frye*, 7 Clark & Finnell. 436; *Edwards v. Browne*, 2 Collyer, 100.

² *Walmesley v. Booth*, 2 Atk. 28; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 97, 98; *Sir John Strange*, in *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 149; *Gwynne v. Heaton*, 1 Bro. Ch. 1, 9; *Hincksman v. Smith*, 3 Russ. 433; *Ryle v. Brown and Swindell*, 1 M'Clel. 519; s. c. 13 Price, 758; *Earl of Aldborough v. Frye*, 7 Clark & Finnell. 436, 456.

³ *Headen v. Rosher*, M'Clel. & Younge, 89; *Potts v. Curtis*, 1 Younge, 543; *Meriweather v. Herran*, 8 B. Monroe, 162; *Earl of Aldborough v. Frye*, 7 Clark & Finnell. 436, 458 to 461.

⁴ *Gowland v. De Faria*, 17 Ves. 20; *Peacock v. Evans*, 16 Ves. 512; *Mr. Swanston's note*, 2 Swanston, 147, 148; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 12, note (k). But see *Nichols v. Gould*, 2 Ves. 422.

⁵ *Davis v. Duke of Marlborough*, 2 Swanst. 151; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 12 note (k); *Ormond v. Fitzroy*, 3 P. Will. 131; *Wiseman v. Beake*, 2 Vern. 121.

⁶ *Ibid.*; *Wood v. Abrey*, 3 Mad. 418, 422; *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 157, 158; 1 Atk. 353; *Gwynne v. Heaton*, 1 Bro. Ch. 1, 9.

[* § 337 *a*. In a late case it is said that it is the imperative duty of the purchaser of a reversion from an expectant heir, to preserve evidence of the *bona fides* of the transaction, and that the sale was for full consideration; and in the absence of such evidence the sale will be set aside.¹ And in another case, it was held that the rule, throwing the burden of proof in such cases upon the purchaser, was applicable where the transaction was a charge and not a sale, and where the heir was of full age and perfectly understood the nature and extent of the transaction.²

§ 337 *b*. This subject occupies considerable space in the English equity reports. It is entirely well settled by many late decisions, that all contracts for the purchase of reversionary interests are viewed in courts of equity with marked watchfulness and suspicion. If there is any inadequacy in the price paid, ever so small, the court will set aside the sale.³ The burden of proof that the sale was originally a fair one rests upon the party seeking to complete it.⁴ And a sale of reversionary estate and the granting a lease of it stand upon the same principles.⁵

And contracts of this character will always be set aside where there is either advantage taken of the necessities of the seller, or any marked inadequacy in the price.⁶

There are some instances in which the sale of reversionary interests is supported on the ground of being part of a family arrangement; but it must clearly appear to be of that character to justify such a result.⁷

§ 337 *c*. The principle that courts of equity will discourage dealings with expectant heirs, and others entitled to estates in expectancy, either by way of the purchase or mortgage of such

¹ [* *Salter v. Bradshaw*, 5 Jur. N. S. 831. See also *Bowes v. Heaps*, 3 Vesey & B. 117; *Edwards v. Burt*, 2 De G., M. & G. 55.

² *Bromley v. Smith*, 5 Jur. N. S. 833.

³ *Foster v. Roberts*, 7 Jur. N. S. 400; s. c. 29 Beav. 467; *Jones v. Ricketts*, 8 Jur. N. S. 1198; s. c. 31 Beav. 130; *Perfect v. Lane*, 30 Beav. 197; *Nesbitt v. Berridge*, 9 Jur. N. S. 1044; s. c. 32 Beav. 282; *Clark v. Malpas*, 31 Beav. 80; *Baker v. Monk*, 10 Jur. N. S. 624; s. c. 33 Beav. 419.

⁴ *Hannah v. Hodson*, 5 Law T. N. S. 42.

⁵ *Grosvenor v. Sherratt*, 28 Beav. 659.

⁶ *Douglas v. Culverwell*, 5 Law T. N. S. 484; s. c. 3 Giff. 251; affirmed 6 Law T. N. S. 272.

⁷ *Talbot v. Staniforth*, 1 Johns. & H. 484; 7 Jur. N. S. 961; s. c. 8 id. 757; *Jenner v. Jenner*, 2 De G., F. & J. 359.

estates, has nothing to do with family settlements made by persons in such circumstances, for the support of the wife or children of such persons. But contracts of the latter character, or any other reasonable and commendable family arrangement as to the settlement of property, is rather favored by courts of equity.¹

§ 337 *d.* But where a creditor obtains security for the father's debt by a conveyance from the son, it is incumbent upon him to show, that the son understood the transaction, and that he did not execute the instrument by reason of any undue influence from the father.² And an assignment made by a daughter for the benefit of her mother, the daughter at the time contemplating marriage, and the conveyance being made without the knowledge of her intended husband, was set aside, both on the ground of undue influence and of fraud upon the marital rights of the husband.³

§ 338. The ground of the interposition of courts of equity in cases of reversioners and remainder-men has been commented on by a late learned judge, with great clearness. "At law, and in equity also" (says he), "generally speaking, a man, who has a power of disposition over his property, whether he sells to relieve his necessities, or to provide for the convenience of his family, cannot avoid his contract upon the mere ground of inadequacy of price. A court of equity, however, will relieve expectant heirs and reversioners from disadvantageous bargains. In the earlier cases it was held necessary to show that undue advantage was actually taken of the situation of such persons. But in more modern times it has been considered, not only that those who were dealing for their expectations, but those who were dealing for vested remainders also, were so exposed to imposition and hard

¹ *Shafto v. Adams*, 4 Giff. 492; s. c. 10 Jur. n. s. 121. But to establish a family arrangement, there must be a full disclosure of all the facts, whether demanded or not. *Greenwood v. Greenwood*, 2 De G., J. & S. 28. If one of the parties be a married woman and she survive her husband, and do not affirm the contract, it will not bind the others. *Bolitho v. Hilyar*, 11 Jur. n. s. 556. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council lately had occasion to discuss the validity of sales of reversionary interests and expectancies, and came to the conclusion that there is nothing absolutely *contra bonos mores* in them. *Godfray v. Godfray*, 12 Jur. n. s. 397.

² *Berdoe v. Dawson*, 11 Jur. n. s. 254.

³ *Chambers v. Crabbe*, 11 Jur. n. s. 277. See also *Rhodes v. Bate*, 11 Jur. n. s. 803. But if not one-sided it is said it will not be set aside. *Potts v. Surr*, 13 W. R. 909. See also *Williams v. Williams*, 2 Drew. & Sm. 378.]

terms, and so much in the power of those with whom they contracted, that it was a fit rule of policy to impose upon all who deal with expectant heirs and reversioners, the *onus* of proving that they had paid a fair price; and otherwise to undo their bargains, and compel a reconveyance of the property purchased.¹ The principle and the policy of the rule may both be equally questionable. Sellers of reversions are not necessarily in the power of those with whom they contract, and are not necessarily exposed to imposition and hard terms. And persons, who sell their expectations and reversions from the pressure of distress, are thrown by the rule into the hands of those who are likely to take advantage of their situation; for no person can securely deal with them. The principle of the rule cannot, however, be applied to sales of reversions by auction.² There being no treaty between the vendor and the purchaser, there can be no opportunity for fraud or imposition on the part of the purchaser. The vendor is in no sense in the power of the purchaser. The sale at auction is evidence of the market-price." This language, however, correct as it may be in its application to the case before the court, where the purchaser had no knowledge of the vendor or his circumstances, or even knew his name until after the purchase at public auction he applied for an abstract of the title, must not be inter-

¹ *s. v. Bawtree v. Watson*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 340; *Newton v. Hunt*, 5 Sim. 511.

² Sir John Leach, in *Shelly v. Nash*, 3 Mad. 232. And see *Peacock v. Evans*, 16 Ves. 514, 515; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 98, 99. Mr. Swanston is of opinion, that, though the principle of the relief, afforded to reversioners, by its generality, seems to extend to every description of persons, dealing for or with a reversionary interest; yet it may be doubted, whether, in order to constitute a title to relief, the reversioner must not also combine the character of *heir*. He has collected and compared the cases. Mr. Fonblanque manifestly does not contemplate any such limitation of the doctrine. He says: "The real object, which the rule proposes, being to restrain the anticipation of expectancies, which must, from its very nature, furnish to designing men an opportunity to practise upon the inexperience or passion of a dissipated man, its operation is not confined to heirs, but extends to all persons, the pressure of whose wants may be considered as obstructing the exercise of that judgment which might otherwise regulate their dealings." 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, note (k). In *Wood v. Abrey*, 3 Mad. 423, the Vice Chancellor said: "The policy of this rule as to reversions may be well doubted; and, if the cases were looked into, it might be found that the rule was *originally* referred only to expectant heirs, and not to reversioners." See also Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 4, p. 398, 399; *Hincksman v. Smith*, 3 Russell, 433. See also *Newton v. Hunt*, 5 Sim. 511.

preted to extend to all cases of sales at public auction; and especially where there had been a previous treaty in negotiation between the vendor and the purchaser or a private sale, and the embarrassment and distress of the vendor is fully known, and the public auction is resorted to by the parties, either by design or by management, to cover up the transaction, or to disguise its true character from the public. To make the sale and the purchase of the reversion valid, under any circumstances, it should clearly appear that the auction is free, fair, and with the ordinary precautions.¹ The reason is plain. Where the sale at public auction is free, fair, and with the ordinary precautions, the fair market-price is presumed to be obtained. But if the sale at public auction be obtained under circumstances which establish clearly that the fair market-value has not been obtained, and that reasonable precautions and advertisements have not been used for this purpose, and that the parties have connived in such a manner as to make the sale appear to be a public and free sale, when it is in fact a mere cover of a private arrangement, then no such inference can arise in favor of the *bona fides* of the auction.²

§ 339. The whole doctrine of courts of equity, with respect to expectant heirs and reversioners, and others in a like predicament, assumes that the one party is defenceless, and is exposed to the demands of the other under the pressure of necessity. It assumes, also, that there is a direct or implied fraud upon the parent or other ancestor, who, from ignorance of the transaction, is misled into a false confidence in the disposition of his property. Hence it should seem, that one material qualification of the doctrine is, the existence of such ignorance. If, therefore, the transaction has been fully made known at the time to the parent, or other person, standing *in loco parentis*; as, for example, to the person from whom the *spes successionis* is entertained, or after the expiration of whose present estate the reversionary interest is to become vested in possession, and it is not objected to by him, the extraordinary protection, generally afforded in cases of this sort by courts of equity, will be withdrawn. *A fortiori*, it will be withdrawn, if the transaction is expressly sanctioned or adopted by such parent or other person standing *in loco parentis*.³ And it

¹ *Ibid.*; *post*, § 347; *Earl of Aldborough v. Frye*, 7 Clark & Finell 436, 456, 460, 461, 466.

² *Ibid.*

³ *King v. Hamlet*, 4 Sim. 223; *s. c.* 2 Mylne & Keen, 473, 474. The judg-

has been strongly said, that it would be monstrous to treat the contracts of a person of mature age, as the acts of an infant, ment of Lord Brougham, in this case, on this point, is very able, and deserves a thorough examination. His lordship on this occasion said: "Two propositions I take to be incontestable, as applicable to the doctrines of this court upon the subject of an expectant heir dealing with his expectancy, and as governing more especially the present question. First, that the extraordinary protection, given in the general case, must be withdrawn, if it shall appear that the transaction was known to the father, or other person standing *in loco parentis*, — the person, for example, from whom the *spes successionis* was entertained, or after whom the reversionary interest was to become vested in possession, — even although such parent or other person took no active part in the negotiation; provided the transaction was not opposed by him, and so carried through in spite of him. Secondly, that if the heir flies off from the transaction, and becomes opposed to him with whom he has been dealing, and repudiates the whole bargain, he must not, in any respect, act upon it, so as to alter the situation of the other party, or his property; at least, that if he does so, the proof lies upon him of showing that he did so under the continuing pressure of the same distress which gave rise to the original dealing. Still more fatal to his claim of relief will it be, if the father, or person *in loco parentis*, shall be found to have concurred in this adoption of the repudiated contract. Either of these propositions would be decisive of the present question, if they are well founded in law, and if the facts allow of their application to it. I shall examine each of them in both respects. The whole doctrine with respect to an expectant heir, assumes that the one party is defenceless and exposed, unprotected to the demands of the other, under the pressure of necessity. It would be monstrous to treat the contracts of a person of mature age, as the acts of an infant, when his parent was aware of his proceedings, and did nothing to prevent them. The parent might thus lie by, and suffer his son to obtain the assistance which he ought himself to have rendered; and then only stand forward to aid him in rescinding engagements which he had allowed him to make and to profit by. If all the cases be examined from the time of Lord Nottingham downwards, no trace will be found in any one of them of the father's or other ancestor's privity. On the contrary, wherever the subject is touched upon, his ignorance is always assumed as part of the case; and its being so seldom mentioned either way, shows clearly that the privity of the father or ancestor never was contemplated. It is, however, several times adverted to in a manner demonstrative of the principle. In *Cole v. Gibbons* (3 P. Wms. 290), the ground of this whole equity is said to be the policy of the law, to prevent the heir being seduced from a dependence upon the ancestor, who probably would have relieved him. In the same spirit, Lord Cowper, in *Twistleton v. Griffith* (1 P. Wms. 310), had before stated, as one effect of the law, its tendency, by cutting off relief at the hands of strangers, to make the heir disclose his difficulties at home. So, in *The Earl of Chesterfield v. Janssen* (1 Atk. 339), Mr. Justice Burnett treats such transactions as things done behind the father's back, and, as it were, a fraud upon him; a view of the subject also adopted by Lord Hardwicke, in the same case (1 Atk. 333, 334). It is as well to mention these cases, because there has been no decision upon the point; but it is quite a clear

when his parent was aware of his proceedings, and did nothing to prevent them. The parent might thus lie by, and suffer his son to obtain the assistance which he ought himself to have rendered; and then only stand forward to aid him in rescinding engagements, which he had allowed him to make, and to profit by.¹

§ 340. The other qualification of the doctrine is not less important. The contract must be made under the pressure of some necessity; for the main ground of the doctrine is, the pressure upon the heir, or the distress of the party, dealing with his expectancies, who is, therefore, under strong temptations to make undue sacrifices of his future interests.² Both of these qualifications need not, indeed, in all cases and under all circumstances, concur to justify relief. It may be sufficient, that either of them forms so essential an ingredient in the case, as to give rise to a just presumption of constructive fraud.³

§ 341. The doctrine of courts of equity upon this subject, if it has not been directly borrowed from, does in no small degree fol-

low, and only new because the facts never afforded a case for decision, the proposition having apparently never been questioned."

¹ *King v. Hamlet*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 473, 474; s. c. 4 Sim. 185.

² *King v. Hamlet*, 4 Sim. 182; s. c. 2 Mylne & Keen, 473, 474.

³ *Earl of Portmore v. Taylor*, 4 Sim. 182; *Davis v. Duke of Marlborough*, 2 Swanst. 139, 154. See also *King v. Hamlet*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 473, 474, 480. Lord Brougham, on this occasion addressing himself to this point, said: "The whole ground of the doctrine is the pressure upon the heir, or the distress of the party dealing with his expectancies. While he continues under that pressure, the law (as Lord Thurlow said in *Gwynne v. Heaton*, 1 Bro. C. C. 1) treats him as an infant. But the infancy is determined when the pressure is removed. The protection which Sir William Grant well describes, in *Peacock v. Evans* (16 Ves. 512), as approaching nearly to incapacity of contracting, must cease, when the exigency of the case is at an end. When the expectant heir has himself thrown off the trammels, which necessity had imposed on him, or rather had induced him to fetter himself withal, and has placed himself in an adverse attitude towards the other party, of whom he had become really independent, he must no longer be treated differently from other persons. From the rule to which all are subject, he cannot be exempt, the rule which forbids a party to repudiate a dealing of which he voluntarily and freely is availing himself. Least of all shall he be permitted to use for his own benefit, or, which is the same thing, to make away with, or in any manner place out of his reach, for his present benefit, the property of another; and then to repudiate the contract by which that property came into his possession. To hold that he was entitled to do this, after the pressure of his circumstances had been removed, and merely because he owed the possession originally to the pressure of former difficulties, would be an extravagant stretch of the doctrines of this court."

low out the policy of, the Roman law in regard to heirs and expectants. By the Macedonian decree (so called from the name of the usurer who gave occasion to it), all obligations of sons, contracted by the loan of money, while they were living in subjection to the paternal authority and jurisdiction, were declared null without distinction. And they were not allowed to be valid even after the death of the father; not so much out of favor to the son, as out of odium to the creditor, who had made an unlawful loan, which was vicious in its origin, as well as in its example. "Verba Senatus consulti Macedoniani hæc sunt, &c. Placere, ne cui, qui filiofamilias mutuam pecuniam dedisset, etiam post mortem parentis ejus, cujus in potestate fuisset, actio petitioque daretur; ut scirent, qui pessimo exemplo fænerarent, nullius posse filiifamilias bonum nomen, expectata patris, morte, fieri."¹ Upon this decree Lord Hardwicke has remarked, that the senate and lawmakers in Rome were not so weak as not to know that a law to restrain prodigality, to prevent a son's running in debt in the life of his father, would be vain in many cases. Yet they made laws to this purpose, namely, the Macedonian decree already mentioned, happy if they could in some degree prevent it; *Est aliquod prodire tenus.*²

§ 342. It is upon similar principles, that *post obit* bonds, and other securities of a like nature, are set aside, when made by heirs and expectants. A *post obit* bond is an agreement, on the receipt of money by the obligor, to pay a larger sum, exceeding the legal rate of interest, upon the death of the person from whom he (the obligor) has some expectations, if he should survive him.³ Such bonds operate as a virtual fraud upon the bounty of the ancestor, and disappoint his intentions, generally by design, and usually in the event.

§ 343. A case of a very similar character is a contract, by which an expectant heir, upon the present receipt of a sum of money, promises to pay over to the lender a large, though an uncertain proportion, of the property which might descend to him

¹ Dig. Lib. 14, tit. 6, l. 1; 1 Domat, Civil Law, B. 1, tit. 6, § 4, and art. 1, 2; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 12, note (I).

² *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 158.

³ *Boynton v. Hubbard*, 7 Mass. 119; *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 157; 1 Atk. 352; *Fox v. Wright*, 6 Mad. 111; *Wharton v. May*, 5 Ves. 27; *Curling v. Townshend*, 19 Ves. 628; *Earl of Aldborough v. Frye*, 7 Clark & Fin. 436.

upon the death of his parent or other ancestor, if he should survive him. It is a fraud upon such parent or other ancestor, and introductive of the worst public mischiefs; for the parent or ancestor is thereby induced to submit in ignorance to the disposition which the law makes of his estate, upon the supposition that it will go to his heir, when in fact a stranger is, against his will, made the substituted heir.¹ It might be very different, if there was a fair, although a secret, agreement between all the heirs to share the estate equally; for such an agreement would have a tendency to suppress all attempts of one or more to overreach the others, as well as to prevent all exertions of undue influence.²

¹ *Boynton v. Hubbard*, 7 Mass. 112.

² *Beckley v. Newland*, 2 P. Wms. 182; *Wethered v. Wethered*, 2 Sim. 183; *Harwood v. Tooke*, 2 Sim. 192; *Hyde v. White*, 5 Sim. 524. Mr. Chief-Justice Parsons, in *Boynton v. Hubbard* (7 Mass. 112), expounded this whole subject with admirable fulness and force; and held that even at law such securities could be relieved against. I gladly extract the following passage from his opinion. "Another case is, where the deceit is upon persons not parties to the contract, as a deceit on a father or other relation, to whom the affairs of an heir or expectant are not disclosed; so that they are influenced to leave their fortunes to be divided amongst a set of dangerous persons and common adventurers, in fact, although not in form. This deceit is relieved against as a public mischief, destructive of a well-regulated authority or control of persons over their children, or others, having expectations from them, and as encouraging extravagance, prodigality, and vice. From the forms of proceeding in courts of equity, it must be admitted that these principles may often be more correctly applied there than in courts of law. Chancery may compel a discovery of facts which a court of law cannot; and from facts disclosed, a chancellor, as a judge of facts, may infer other facts, whence deceit, public or private, may be irresistibly presumed. Whereas at law, fraud cannot be presumed, but must be admitted or proved to a jury. But, when a court of law has regularly the fact of fraud admitted or proved, no good reason can be assigned why relief should not be obtained there, although not always in the same way in which it may be obtained in equity. A case, in which an heir or expectant is frequently relieved against his own contract, is a *post obit* bond. This is an agreement on the receipt of a sum of money by the obligor, to pay a larger sum, exceeding the legal rate of interest, on the death of the person from whom he has some expectation, if the obligor be then living. This contract is not considered as a nullity; but it may be made on reasonable terms, in which the stipulated payment is not more than a just indemnity for the hazard. But whenever an advantage is taken of the necessity of the obligor, to induce him to make this contract, he is relieved, as against an unconscionable bargain, on payment of the principal and interest. This contract may be made on data, whence its reasonableness may be ascertained; for the lives of the obligor, and of the person on whose death the payment is to be made, are subject to be valued, as is done in insurances upon lives. But the covenant de-

§ 344. From what has been already said, it follows, as a natural inference, that contracts of this sort are not in all cases, declared on in the case at bar is not in the nature of a *post obit* contract. Another case in which an heir is relieved, is when he is entitled to an estate in reversion or remainder, expectant on the death of some ancestor or relative, and he contracts to sell the same for present money. All these cases are not relieved against as fraudulent; because a reasonable and sufficient consideration may be paid, as ascertained by the annual value of the estate and of the intervening life. But, as in *post obit* contracts, when an advantage is taken by the purchaser of the necessity of the seller, he will be relieved against the sale, on repaying the principal and interest, and sometimes paying for reasonable repairs made by the purchaser. This relief is granted on the ground that the contract of sale was unconscionable. In unconscionable *post obit* contracts, courts of law may, when they appear, in a suit commenced upon them, to have been against conscience, give relief by directing a recovery of so much money only as shall be equal to the principal received and the interest. But in sales of remainders and reversions by grants executed, I know of no relief that courts of law can give, unless the grants shall appear to have been fraudulently obtained of the grantor; in which case the fraud will vitiate and render null the grants so infected. The contract before us is not a sale of a remainder or reversion; but is different from any noticed in the reports that have been cited. There is one case of a contract between presumptive heirs, respecting their expectancies from the same ancestor. It is the case of *Beckley v. Newland*. The parties had married two sisters, presumptive heirs of Mr. Turgis. The husbands agreed that whatever should be given by Mr. Turgis should be equally divided between them. After Mr. Turgis's death, the defendant, who had the greater part given to him, was compelled to execute the agreement. The reciprocal benefit of the chance was a sufficient consideration. The tendency of the agreement was to guard against undue influence over the testator; and it could not be unreasonable to covenant to do what the law would have done if Turgis had died intestate. The covenant declared on in the case at bar is an agreement by an heir having two ancestors then living, an uncle and an aunt, that if he survive them, or either of them, he will convey to a stranger one-third part of all the estate real and personal, which shall come to him from those ancestors, or either of them, by descent, distribution, or devise. And it is found by the jury that this contract was not obtained from the heir by the fraud of the purchaser. If, therefore, this covenant is void, it must be on the principle that it is a fraud, not on either of the parties, for that the jury have negatived, but on third persons not parties to it, productive of public mischief, and against sound public policy. If the contract had this effect, it is apparent to the court from the record; the whole contract being a part of the record. And that a contract of this nature had this effect we cannot doubt. The ancestor, having no knowledge of the existence of the contract, is induced to submit his estate to the disposition of the law which had designated the defendant as an heir. The defendant's agreement with the plaintiff is to substitute him as a co-heir with himself to his uncle's estate. The uncle is thus made to leave a portion of his estate to Boynton, a stranger, without his knowledge, and consequently without any such intention. This, Lord Hardwicke calls a deceit

utterly void; but they are subject to all real and just equities between the parties, so that there shall be no inadequacy of price, and no inequality of advantages in the bargain. If in other respects these contracts are perfectly fair, courts of equity will permit them to have effect, as securities for the sum to which *ex æquo et bono* the lender is entitled; for he who seeks equity, must do equity; and, therefore, relief will not be granted upon such securities, except upon equitable terms.¹

§ 345. And where, after the contemplated events have occurred, and the pressure of necessity has been removed, the party freely and deliberately, and upon full information, confirms the precedent contract, or other transaction, courts of equity will generally hold him bound thereby; for, if a man is fully informed, and acts with his eyes open, he may, by a new agreement, bar himself from relief.² But, if the party is still acting under the pressure of the

on the ancestor. And what is the consequence of deceits of this kind upon the public? Heirs, who ought to be under the reasonable advice and direction of their ancestor, who has no other influence over them than what arises from a fear of his displeasure, from which fear the heirs may be induced to live industriously, virtuously, and prudently, are, with the aid of money speculators, let loose from this salutary control, and may indulge in prodigality, idleness, and vice; and taking care, by hypocritically preserving appearances not to alarm their ancestor, may go on trafficking with his expected bounty, making it a fund to supply the wastes of dissipation and extravagance. Certainly the policy of the law will not sanction a transaction of this kind, from a regard to the moral habits of the citizens." [In a subsequent case in the same court, where *Boynton v. Hubbard* was cited and approved, it was determined that an heir expectant might lawfully covenant, with the consent of his ancestor, to convey the estate, which should come to him by descent or otherwise from such ancestor, a fair consideration being paid. *Fitch v. Fitch*, 8 Pick. 480. And see *Trull v. Eastman*, 3 Met. 123.]

¹ *Boynton v. Hubbard*, 7 Mass. 112, 120; *Curling v. Townshend*, 19 Ves. 628; *Bernal v. Donegal*, 3 Dow, 133, s. c. 1 Bligh (N. S.), 594; *Wharton v. May*, 5 Ves. 27; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 13, and note (p); *Evans v. Cheshire*, Belt's Supplement, 300; *Crowe v. Ballard*, 3 Bro. Ch. 120; *Gwynne v. Heaton*, 1 Bro. Ch. 1, 9, 10; *Davis v. Duke of Marlborough*, 2 Swanst. 174; *Earl of Aldborough v. Frye*, 6 Clark & Fin. 436, 462, 464.

² *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 125; 1 Atk. 354; *Crowe v. Ballard*, 3 Bro. Ch. 150; *Coles v. Gibbon*, 3 P. Will. 293, 294; *Cole v. Gibson*, 1 Ves. 503, 506, 507; *Cann v. Cann*, 1 P. Will. 723. Mr. Fonblanque has remarked that Lord Hardwicke, in *Chesterfield v. Janssen* (2 Ves. 125; 1 Atk. 351), has brought together, and classed, all the cases upon the subject of confirmation; and the result seems to be, that, if the original contract be illegal or usurious, no subsequent agreement or confirmation of the party can give it validity. But, if it be merely against conscience, then, if the party, being fully informed of all the cir-

original transaction, or the original necessity; or, if he is still under the influence of the original transaction, and of the delusive opinion that it is valid and binding upon him; then, and under such circumstances, courts of equity will hold him not barred from relief by any such confirmation.¹

[* 345 a. In a case before the lord chancellor,² where the plaintiff, a builder, had been denied his payments, by the withholding of the certificates of the architects, who were the arbiters of the

cumstances of it, and of the objections to it, voluntarily comes to a new agreement, he thereby bars himself of that relief, which he might otherwise have had in equity. Not so, if the confirmation be a continuance of the original fraud or imposition. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 13, note (r). See also id. § 14, note (v). Whether this statement will be found fully borne out by the authorities, is, perhaps, not beyond doubt. Where a contract is utterly void, as from illegality, or as being contrary to good morals, or as contrary to public policy, there seems the strongest reason to say, that it cannot acquire any validity, from any confirmation; for the original taint attaches to it through every change. To give it efficacy would contradict two well-established maxims of the common law. *Quod contra legem fit, pro infecto habetur. Quod ab initio non valet, in tractu temporis non convalescet; et quæ malo sunt inchoata principio, vix est, ut bono peragantur exitu.* 4 Co. 2; id. 31; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 11, note (y). But, where the contract is merely voidable, it seems, upon general principles, capable of confirmation. The difficulty is, not so much in stating that it is capable of confirmation, but under what circumstances the confirmation ought to be held conclusive. The remarks of Lord Hardwicke, in *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 2 Ves. 158, 159, 1 Atk. 354; and *Cole v. Gibson*, 1 Ves. 506, 507, compared with those of Lord Thurlow, in *Crowe v. Ballard*, 3 Bro. Ch. 120; s. c. 1 Ves. 219, 220; s. c. 2 Cox, 257, and of Lord Eldon, in *Wood v. Downes*, 18 Ves. 123, 124, 128; and of Lord Erskine, in *Morse v. Royal*, 12 Ves. 373, 374, have not wholly relieved the doctrine from difficulty. In *Cole v. Gibson*, 1 Ves. 503, 506, 507, Lord Hardwicke seemed to hold a marriage brokage bond capable of confirmation, though held void upon public policy. But in *Shirley v. Martin*, in 1779, the Court of Exchequer held, that contracts, avoided on account of public inconvenience, would not admit of subsequent confirmation by the party; and, therefore, that a marriage-brokage bond was incapable of confirmation. Cited 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 14, note (u); id. ch. 4, § 10, note (s); s. c. cited 1 Ball & B. 357, 358; 3 P. W. 75, Cox's note. See also *Say v. Barwick*, 1 Ves. & B. 195. See *Gwynne v. Heaton*, 1 Bro. Ch. 1, and Mr. Belt's note (l), *ibid.* See also *ante*, § 263, and *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 25, p. 496 to 503.

¹ *Wood v. Downes*, 18 Ves. 123, 124, 128; *Crowe v. Ballard*, 3 Bro. Ch. 120; s. c. 1 Ves. 214, 219, 220; s. c. 2 Cox, 253, 257; *Taylor v. Rochford*, 2 Ves. 281; *Murray v. Palmer*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 486; *Roche v. O'Brien*, 1 B. & Beatt. 338, 339, 340, 353, 354, 356; *Morse v. Royal*, 12 Ves. 373, 374; *Gowland v. De Faria*, 17 Ves. 20; *Dunbar v. Tredennick*, 2 Ball & B. 316, 317, 318.

² [* *Ormes v. Beadel*, 6 Jur. n. s. 1103, Nov. 1860; s. c. 9 W. R. 25; s. c. 2 Giff. 166.

contract; and where, by the pressure of his workmen and the use of actual force on the part of one of them, he had been compelled to assent to an agreement to refer his claim to an arbitrator, to be paid according to the valuation of the arbitrator, giving up his contract, upon the receipt of £50, there being a much larger sum due him; and where the arbitrator proceeded to make the valuation, and was attended by the builder: it was held, reversing the decision of the vice chancellor,¹ that the plaintiff had so acted upon the agreement, as to ratify and confirm it, and was not therefore entitled to relief.]

§ 346. Similar principles will govern in cases, where the heir or other expectant is relieved from his necessities, and becomes opposed to the person with whom he has been dealing, and seeks to repudiate the bargain. In such cases he must not do any act, by which the rights or property of the other party will be injuriously affected, after he is thus deemed to be restored to his general capacity. If he does, he becomes affected with the ordinary rule, which governs in other cases, and forbids a party to repudiate a dealing, and at the same time to avail himself fully of all the rights and powers resulting therefrom, as if it were completely valid.²

§ 347. Even the sale of a *post obit* bond at public auction will not necessarily give it validity, or free it from the imputation of being obtained under the pressure of necessity. For the circumstances may be such as to establish, that the expectant is acting without any of the usual precautions to obtain a fair price; and is in great distress for money; and is really in the hands and under the control of those who choose to become bidders for the purpose of fleecing him.³ The case is not like the case of an ordinary sale of a reversion at public auction, where the usual precautions are taken; for there it may be perfectly proper not to require the purchaser to show that he has given the full value.⁴ Where the sale is public, and free and fair, it may be justly presumed, that the fair market-price is obtained, and there seems no

¹ s. c. 6 Jur. n. s. 550; s. c. 2 Giff. 166. See *Jones v. Smith*, 33 Miss. 215.]

² *King v. Hamlet*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 474, 480. See also *Gwynne v. Heaton*, 1 Bro. Ch. 1; *Peacock v. Evans*, 16 Ves. 512; *ante*, § 339, 340.

³ *Fox v. Wright*, 6 Mad. 77; *Earl of Aldborough v. Frye*, 7 Clark & Fin. 436.

⁴ *Earl of Aldborough v. Frye*, 7 Clark & Fin. 436; *ante*, § 338.

reason to call in question its general validity ; but it should be specially impeached. In sales of reversions at public auction, there is not usually any opportunity, as there is upon a private treaty, for fraud and imposition upon the seller. The latter is in no just sense in the power of the purchaser. The sale by public auction is, under ordinary circumstances, evidence of the market-price.¹ But the sale of *post obit* bonds at auction carries with it, generally, a presumption of distress and pecuniary embarrassment ; and if the ordinary precautions are thrown aside, there is a violent presumption of extravagant rashness, imprudence, or circumvention.

§ 348. Contracts of a nature nearly resembling *post obit* bonds, have, in cases of young and expectant heirs, been often relieved against, upon similar principles. Thus, where tradesmen and others have sold goods to such persons at extravagant prices, and under circumstances demonstrating imposition, or undue advantage, or an intention to connive at secret extravagance, and profuse expenditures, unknown to their parents, or other ancestors, courts of equity have reduced the securities, and cut down the claims to their reasonable and just amount.²

§ 349. Another class of constructive frauds upon the rights, interests, or duties of third persons, embraces all those agreements and other acts of parties, which operate directly or virtually to delay, defraud, or deceive creditors. Of course, we do not here speak of cases of express and intentional fraud upon creditors, but of such as virtually and indirectly operates the same mischief, by abusing their confidence, misleading their judgment, or secretly undermining their interest. It is difficult, in many cases of this sort, to separate the ingredients, which belong to positive and intentional fraud, from those of a mere constructive nature, which the law pronounces fraudulent upon principles of public policy. Indeed, they are often found mixed up in the same transaction ; and any attempt to distinguish between them, or to weigh

¹ *Shelly v. Nash*, 3 Mad. 232 ; *Fox v. Wright*, 6 Mad. & Geld. 111 ; *Earl of Aldborough v. Frye*, 7 Clark & Fin. 436, 456 to 461.

² *Bill v. Price*, 1 Vern. 467, and Mr. Raithby's note (1) ; *id.* 1 Eq. Abr. 91, G. pl. 3 ; *Lamplugh v. Smith*, 2 Vern. 77 ; *Whitley v. Price*, 2 Vern. 78 ; *Brooke v. Gally*, 2 Atk. 34, 35, 36 ; *Freeman v. Bishop*, 2 Atk. 39 ; *Gilbert*, *Lex Prætor*, 291. But see *Barney v. Beak*, 2 Ch. Cas. 136 ; *Gwynne v. Heaton*, 1 Bro. Ch. 9, 10.

them separately, would be a task of little utility, and might, perhaps, mislead and perplex the inquiries of students.

§ 350. It must be a fundamental policy of all enlightened nations to protect and subserve the rights of creditors; and a great anxiety to afford full relief against frauds upon them has been manifested, not only in the civil law, but from a very early period, in the common law also.¹ In the civil law it was declared, that whatever was done by debtors to defeat their creditors, whether by alienation, or by other disposition of their property, should be revoked or null, as the case might require. “*Ait Prætor; Quæ fraudationis causâ gesta erunt, cum eo, qui fraudem non ignoraverit; de his curator bonorum, vel ei, cui de ea re actionem dare oportebit, intra annum, quo experiundi potestas fuerit, actionem dabo. Idque etiam adversus ipsum, qui fraudem fecit, servabo. Necessario Prætor hoc edictum proposuit; quo edicto consulit creditoribus, revocando ea, quæcunque in fraudem eorum alienata sunt.*”² *Ait ergo Prætor; Quæ fraudationis causâ gesta erunt. Hæc verba generalia sunt, et continent in se omnem omnino in fraudem factam, vel alienationem vel quemcunque contractum. Quodcunque igitur fraudis causâ factum est, videtur his verbis revocari, quæcunque fuerit. Nam, latè ista verba patent. Sive ergo rem alienavit, sive acceptilatione vel pacto aliquem liberavit.*³ *Idem erit probandum. Et si pignora liberit, vel quem alium in fraudem creditorum præponat.*”⁴ And the rule was not only applied to alienations, but to fraudulent debts, and, indeed, to every species of transaction or omission, prejudicial to creditors. “*Vel ei præbuit exceptionem, sive se obligavit fraudandorum creditorum causâ, sive numeravit pecuniam, vel quodcunque aliud fecit in fraudem creditorum; palam est, edictum locum habere, &c. Et qui aliquid fecit, ut desinat habere, quod habet, ad hoc edictum pertinet. In fraudem facere videri etiam eum, qui non facit, quod debet facere, intelligendum est; id est, si non utitur servitutibus.*”⁵

§ 351. Hence, all voluntary dispositions, made by debtors, upon the score of liberality, were revocable, whether the donee knew of

¹ See *Loomis v. Tiff*, 16 Barbour, 543.

² Dig. Lib. 42, tit. 8, l. 1, § 1.

³ Dig. Lib. 42, tit. 8, l. 1, § 2; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 44, tit. 8, n. 2.

⁴ Id. l. 2; 1 Domat, B. 2, tit. 10, art. 7.

⁵ Dig. Lib. 42, tit. 8, l. 3, § 1, 2; id. l. 4; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 42, tit. 8, n. 1 to 36; 1 Domat, B. 2, tit. 10, art. 1, pr. tot.; id. art. 8.

the prejudice intended to the creditors or not. "Simili modo dicimus, et si cui donatum est, non esse quærendum, an sciente eo, cui donatum gestum sit; sed hoc tantum, an fraudentur creditores."¹ And the like rule was applied to purchasers, even for a valuable consideration, if they knew the fraudulent intention at the time of their purchases, and thus became partakers of it, that they might profit by it.² "Quæ fraudationis causâ gesta erunt, cum eo, qui fraudem non ignoraverit, de his, &c., lectionem dabo. Si debitor in fraudem creditorum minore pretio fundum scienti emptori vendiderit; deinde hi, quibus de revocando eo actio datur, eum petant; quæsitum est, an pretium restituere debent? Proculus existimat, omnimodi restituendum esse fundum, etiamsi pretium non solvatur; et rescriptum est secundum Proculi sententiam."³

§ 352. The common law adopted similar principles at an early period. These principles, however, have been more fully carried into effect by the statutes of 50 Edward III. ch. 6, and 3 Henry VII. ch. 4, against fraudulent gifts of goods and chattels; by the statute of 13 Elizabeth, ch. 5, against fraudulent conveyances of lands to defeat or delay creditors; and by the statute of 27 Elizabeth, ch. 4, against fraudulent or voluntary conveyances of lands, to defeat subsequent purchasers. These statutes have always received a favorable and liberal interpretation in all the courts, both of law and equity, in suppression of fraud.⁴ Indeed, the principles and rules of the common law, as now universally known and understood, are so strong against fraud, in every shape, that Lord Mansfield has remarked, that the common law would have attained every end proposed by these statutes.⁵ This is, perhaps,

¹ Dig. Lib. 42, tit. 8, l. 6, § 11; 1 Domat, B. 2, tit. 10, art. 2.

² Dig. Lib. 42, tit. 8, l. 1; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 42, tit. 8, n. 1.

³ Dig. Lib. 42, tit. 8, l. 1; id. l. 7; 1 Domat, B. 2, tit. 10, art. 4.

⁴ Cadogan v. Kennett, Cowp. 432; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, P. 2, ch. 3, § 4, p. 410, 411, 412; Newland on Contracts, ch. 23, p. 370, 371; Com. Dig. *Covin*, B. 2, 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*; Hamilton v. Russell, 1 Cranch, 309; Com. Dig. *Covin*, B. 2. The statutes of 50 Edward III. ch. 6, and 3 Henry VII. ch. 4, expressly declare all gifts, &c., of goods and chattels, intended to defraud creditors, to be null and void. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, note (c); Com. Dig. *Covin*, B. 2. In Hamilton v. Russell (1 Cranch, 309), the Supreme Court of the United States said, that the statutes of 13 Eliz. and 27 Eliz. are considered as only declaratory of the principles of the common law. See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 13, and note (d); Co. Litt. 290 b.

stating the matter somewhat too broadly, at least in regard to the statute of 27 Elizabeth, ch. 4, as it is now construed; for the latter, in favor of subsequent purchasers, applies to cases of voluntary conveyances, whether they are fraudulent or not.¹ Courts of equity, from the enlarged principles upon which they act, to protect the rights and interests of creditors, give full effect to all the provisions, and exert their jurisdiction upon the same construction of these statutes, which is adopted by courts of law.² They even go further; and (as we shall presently see) extend their aid to many cases not reached by these statutes.

§ 353. And, in the first place, let us consider the nature and operation of the statute of 13 Elizabeth, ch. 5, as to creditors, which has been universally adopted in America, as the basis of our jurisprudence on the same subject. The object of the legislature evidently was, to protect creditors from those frauds which are frequently practised by debtors, under the pretence of discharging a moral obligation; that is, under the pretence of making suitable provisions for wives, children, and other relations. Independently of the statute, no one can reasonably doubt that a gift or conveyance, which has neither a good nor a meritorious con-

¹ See *Buckle v. Mitchell*, 18 Ves. 110; *Doe v. Manning*, 9 East, 59; *Doe v. Rusham*, 17 Queen's Bench, 723; *Townshend v. Windham*, 2 Ves. 10, 11; *Walker v. Burroughs*, 1 Atk. 93, 94; *Cathcart v. Robinson*, 5 Peters, 264. There is a distinction made in England between the statute of 13 Eliz. ch. 5, and the statute of 27 Eliz. ch. 4, which should be here borne in mind, though it will naturally come under consideration in a subsequent page. All voluntary conveyances are not void against creditors, equally the same as they are against subsequent creditors. It is necessary on the statute of 13 Eliz. to prove, that the party was indebted at the time, or immediately after the execution of the deed, or otherwise it would be attended with bad consequences, because the statute extends to *goods* and *chattels*; and such construction would defeat every provision for children and families, though the father was not indebted at the time. *Walker v. Burroughs*, 1 Atk. 93; *Battersbee v. Farrington*, 1 Swanst. 106, 113. But upon the statute of 27 Eliz. ch. 4, subsequent purchasers for a valuable consideration may set aside the former voluntary conveyance, though *bonâ fide* made, even though such purchasers had full notice of such voluntary conveyance. *Doe v. Routledge*, Cowp. 711, 712; *Gooch's case*, 5 Co. 60, 61; *Twyne's case*, 3 Co. 83; *Doe v. Manning*, 9 East, 59; *Buckle v. Mitchell*, 18 Ves. 110; *Holloway v. Millard*, 1 Mad. 414, 417; *Cotterell v. Howe*, 13 Simons, 506. The statute of 27 Eliz. ch. 4, does not apply to goods and chattels, but to lands and other real estate only. *Jones v. Croucher*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 315; *Atherley on Mar. Sett.* ch. 13, p. 207; *post*, § 355 to 365, and § 425 to 434.

² *Ibid.*

sideration to support it, ought not to be valid against creditors; for every man is bound to be just before he is generous;¹ and the very fact that he makes a voluntary gift or conveyance to mere strangers to the prejudice of his creditors, affords a conclusive evidence that it is fraudulent. The statute, while it seems to protect the legal rights of creditors against the frauds of their debtors, anxiously excepts from such imputation the *bond fide* discharge of moral duties. It does not, therefore, declare all voluntary conveyances to be void; but only all fraudulent conveyances to be void.² And whether a conveyance be fraudulent or not is declared to depend upon its being made "upon good consideration and *bond fide*."³ It is not sufficient that it be upon good consideration or *bond fide*. It must be both. And, therefore if a conveyance or gift be defective in either particular, although it is valid between the parties and their representatives, yet it is utterly void as to creditors.

§ 354. This leads us to the inquiry, what are deemed good considerations in the contemplation of the statute. A good consideration is sometimes used in the sense of a consideration which is valid in point of law; and then it includes a meritorious, as well as a valuable consideration.⁴ But it is more frequently used in a sense contradistinguished from valuable; and then it imports a consideration of blood, or natural affection, as when a man grants an estate to a near relation, merely founded upon motives of gen-

¹ *Copis v. Middleton*, 2 Mad. 428; *Partridge v. Gopp*, 1 Eden, 166, 167, 168; s. c. *Ambler*, 598, 599.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12 (a); *Doe v. Routledge, Cowp.* 708; *Cadogan v. Kennett, Cowp.* 432, 434; *Holloway v. Millard*, 1 Mad. 414; *Sagitary v. Hide*, 2 Vern. 44. Many of the succeeding remarks upon this subject I have taken, almost literally, from Mr. Fonblanque's very able notes; and I desire this general acknowledgment to be taken, as an expression of my very great obligations to him in every part of my work. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, and note (a). The word "voluntary" is not to be found either in the statute of 13 Eliz. ch. 5, or of the statute of 27 Eliz. ch. 4; *Holloway v. Millard*, 1 Mad. 414. A voluntary conveyance to a stranger, made *bond fide* by a party not indebted at the time, would be good against subsequent creditors. *Holloway v. Millard*, 1 Mad. 227, 228; *Walker v. Burroughs*, 1 Atk. 93.

³ *Ibid.*; Bacon, Abridg. *Fraud*, C.

⁴ *Hodgson v. Butts*, 3 Cranch, 140; *Copis v. Middleton*, 2 Mad. 430; *Twyne's case*, 3 Co. 81; *Taylor v. Jones*, 2 Atk. 601; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 23, p. 386; *Partridge v. Gopp, Ambler*, 598, 599; s. c. 1 Eden, 167, 168; *Atherley on Mar. Sett.* ch. 13, p. 191, 192.

erosity, prudence, and natural duty. A valuable consideration is such as money, marriage, or the like, which the law esteems as an equivalent given for the grant, and it is, therefore, founded upon motives of justice.¹ Deeds, made upon a good consideration only, are considered as merely voluntary; those made upon a valuable consideration are treated as compensatory. The words "good consideration," in the statute, may be properly construed to include both descriptions; for it cannot be doubted, that it meant to protect conveyances, made *bond fide* and for a valuable consideration, as well as those made *bond fide*, upon the consideration of blood or affection.²

§ 355. In regard to voluntary conveyances, they are unquestionably protected by the statute in all cases, where they do not break in upon the legal rights of creditors. But when they break in upon such rights, and so far as they have that effect, they are not permitted to avail against those rights. If a man, therefore, who is indebted, conveys property to his wife or children, such a conveyance is, or at least may be, within the statute; for, although the consideration is good, as between the parties, yet it is not in contemplation of law, *bond fide*; for it is inconsistent with the good faith which a debtor owes to his creditors, to withdraw his property voluntarily from the satisfaction of their claims;³ and no man has the right to prefer the claims of affection to those of justice. This doctrine, however (as we shall presently see), requires, or at least may admit of, some qualification in relation to existing creditors, where the circumstances of the indebtedment and the conveyance repel any possible imputation of fraud, as where the conveyance is of a small property by a person of great wealth, and his debts bear a very small proportion to his actual means.

§ 356. But, at all events, the same doctrine does not apply to a man not indebted at the time, or in favor of subsequent creditors.

¹ 2 Black. Com. 297; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, note (a).

² Doe v. Routledge, Cowp. 708, 710, 711, 712; Copis v. Middleton, 2 Mad. 430; Hodgson v. Butts, 3 Cranch, 140; Twyne's case, 3 Co. 81.

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, note (a); Twyne's case, 3 Co. 81; Townshend v. Windham, 2 Ves. 10, 11; Doe v. Routledge, Cowp. 711; Russell v. Hammond, 1 Atk. 15, 16; Holloway v. Millard, 1 Mad. 414; Bayard v. Hoffman, 4 Johns. Ch. 450; Reade v. Livingston, 3 Johns. Ch. 481; Taylor v. Jones, 2 Atk. 600, 601; Townshend v. Windham, 2 Ves. Sen. 10; Copis v. Middleton, 2 Mad. 425. See Seward v. Jackson, 5 Cowen, 406; Wickes v. Clarke, 8 Paige, 160, 165.

There is nothing inequitable or unjust in a man's making a voluntary conveyance or gift, either to a wife, or to a child, or even to a stranger, if it is not, at the time, prejudicial to the rights of any other persons, or in furtherance of any meditated design of future fraud or injury to other persons.¹ If, indeed, there is any design of fraud, or collusion, or intent to deceive third persons, in such conveyances, although the party be not then indebted, the conveyance will be held utterly void, as to subsequent as well as to present creditors, for it is not *bonâ fide*.²

§ 357. It has been justly remarked, that the distinction between cases where the party is indebted, and those where he is not indebted, is drawn from considerations too obvious to require illustration from cases. For, if a man indebted were allowed to divest himself of his property in favor of his wife or his children, his creditors would be defrauded. But if a man not indebted, and not meaning to commit a fraud, could not make an effective settlement in favor of such objects, because, by possibility, he might afterwards become indebted, it would destroy those family pro-

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, note (a); Townshend v. Windham, 2 Ves. 11; Walker v. Burroughs, 1 Atk. 93; Bac. Abridg. *Fraud*, C.; Doe v. Rutledge, Cowp. 710, 711; Russell v. Hammond, 1 Atk. 15, 16; Holloway v. Millard, 1 Mad. 414; Battersbee v. Farringdon, 1 Swanst. 106, 113; Reade v. Livingston, 3 Johns. Ch. 481.

² Stileman v. Ashdown, 2 Atk. 481; Reade v. Livingston, 3 Johns. Ch. 481; Richardson v. Smallwood, Jac. 552. As to *subsequent* creditors, it cannot be presumed that a voluntary conveyance is fraudulent, unless the party at the time is deeply indebted. Lord Alvanley, in Lush v. Wilkinson (5 Ves. 387), said: "A single debt will not do. Every man must be indebted for the common bills of his house, though he pays them every week. It must depend upon this, whether he was in insolvent circumstances at the time." See also Skarf v. Soulby, 16 Sim. 481. Mr. Chancellor Kent, in Reade v. Livingston (3 Johns. Ch. 498), said: "Such a loose dictum, one would suppose, was not of much weight, as there is no preceding case, which gives the least countenance to it." But Lord Alvanley probably meant no more than this: that, as to subsequent creditors, there could scarcely arise a presumption that the conveyance was intentionally fraudulent (without which such subsequent creditors could have no case for relief), unless the party were deeply indebted at the time, and contemplated a fraud upon his creditors. In this view, there is much force in his lordship's remarks. Indeed, this seems to be the view of the matter entertained by Mr. Chancellor Kent, in the same case. Ibid. 501. See also the remarks of Sir William Grant, in Kidney v. Coussmaker, 12 Ves. 155, and Sir Thomas Plumer, in Holloway v. Millard, 1 Mad. 414. See the Jurist, January 6, 1844, p. 461.

visions, which are, under certain restrictions, a benefit to the public, as well as to the individual objects of them.¹

§ 358. In regard to voluntary conveyances, there is an intermediate case touching creditors, which requires consideration. Suppose a party possessed of a large estate, and indebted at the same time to a considerable amount, but his debts bearing a small proportion to his actual property, should make a settlement or other voluntary conveyance, in favor of his wife or children, of a part of his estate, which would still leave a large surplus in his own hands, beyond the assets necessary to pay his debts; and afterwards, at a distance of time, he should lose or spend so much of his property as not to leave enough to discharge such debts; the question would then arise, whether, in regard to such creditors, the settlement or other conveyance would be void or not. To such a case it is somewhat difficult to apply the preceding reasoning, so as to avoid the settlement or other conveyance; because there is no pretence to say, that upon the posture of the facts any actual fraud could be intended, or that the creditors were prejudiced, except by their own voluntary delay.

§ 359. Upon this question, a learned judge (Mr. Chancellor Kent) has pronounced an opinion, which, from his acknowledged ability and sagacity in sifting the authorities, is entitled to very great weight. His language is, "The conclusion to be drawn from the cases is, that, if the party is indebted at the time of the voluntary settlement, it is presumed to be fraudulent in respect to such debts (that is, those antecedently due), and no circumstance will permit those debts to be affected by the settlement, or repel the legal presumption of fraud. The presumption of law in this case does not depend upon the amount of the debts, or the extent of the property in settlement, or the circumstances of the party. There is no such line of distinction set up or traced in any of the cases. The attempt would be embarrassing, if not dangerous, to the rights of creditors, and prove an inlet to fraud. The law has, therefore, wisely disabled the debtor from making any voluntary settlement of his estate to stand in the way of existing debts. This is the clear and uniform doctrine of the cases."²

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, note.

² Mr. Chancellor Kent, in *Reade v. Livingston*, 3 Johns. Ch. 500, 501. See also 2 Sch. & Lefr. 714; *Fitzer v. Fitzer*, 2 Atk. 511, 513; *Taylor v. Jones*, 2 Atk. 602; *Bayard v. Hoffman*, 4 Johns. Ch. 450; *Richardson v. Smallwood*, Jac.

§ 360. This doctrine is certainly *strictissimi juris*, and assumes, as a principle of law, that the mere indebtedment of a party constitutes, *per se*, conclusive evidence of fraud in a voluntary conveyance, in all cases where the creditors, to whom he is then indebted, are concerned.¹ Nay, it seems to go farther; for, upon the same reasoning, subsequent creditors have been allowed to participate in the same relief, even though, as to them alone, without

552. But see *contra*, *Verplank v. Sterry*, 12 Johns. 536, and *Jackson v. Town*, 4 Cowen, 603, 604. See *Seward v. Jackson*, 8 Cowen, 406; *Wickes v. Clark*, 8 Paige, 161, 165. That there is very great weight in this reasoning, cannot be questioned. That it is, upon principle, entirely satisfactory, as the true exposition of the statute of 13 Eliz. ch. 5, or of the common law, as to creditors, may admit of some diversity of judgment. Lord Mansfield has justly remarked, in *Cadogan v. Kennett*, Cowp. 484, upon the statute of 13 Elizabeth, "Such a construction is not to be made in support of creditors, as will make third persons sufferers. Therefore, the statute does not militate against any transaction *bond fide* made, and where there is *no imagination* of fraud. And so is the common law." "A fair, voluntary conveyance may be good against creditors, notwithstanding its being voluntary. The circumstance of a man being indebted, at the time of his making a voluntary conveyance, is an *argument* of fraud. The question, in every case, therefore, is, whether the act done is a *bond fide* transaction, or whether a trick or contrivance to defeat creditors." If this language contains a true exposition of the law on this subject, then the question of fraud, or not, is open in all cases, where a man is indebted, as a matter of *fact*; and the law does not absolutely pronounce that the indebtedment *per se* makes the settlement fraudulent. Lord Mansfield used language to a like effect, in *Doe v. Routledge*, Cowp. 708, 709, 710, 711. The doctrine (as we have seen) in *Hinde's Lessee v. Longworth* (11 Wheaton, 199), stands upon grounds analogous to those of Lord Mansfield, and is not easily reconcilable with that in *Reade v. Livingston*, 3 Johns. Ch. 500, 501. See also *Holloway v. Millard*, 1 Mad. 414; *Jones v. Boulter*, 1 Cox, 288, 294, 295. In *Richardson v. Smallwood* (Jac. Rep. 552), the subject was considerably discussed by the Master of the Rolls; but from his reasoning I should not draw any other conclusion, than that an indebtedment at the time was a circumstance presumptive of a fraudulent intent. See *Skarf v. Soulby*, 16 Sim. 481.

¹ In *Townshend v. Windham* (2 Ves. 10, 11), Lord Hardwicke said: "I know no case on the statute of 13 Eliz., where a man, indebted at the time, makes a voluntary conveyance to a child, without consideration, and dies indebted, but that it shall be considered as a part of his estate for the benefit of his creditors, &c." "A man actually indebted, and conveying voluntarily, always means it to be in fraud of creditors, as I take it." *Belt's Supp.* p. 243, 247. But this language, though so very general, ought not, on that very account to have more than general truth ascribed to it, where the indebtedment is of a nature and extent that makes it presumptive of fraud, or the conveyance is a direct and immediate interference with the rights of creditors. See *Richardson v. Smallwood*, Jac. Rep. 552.

such antecedent debts, there could be no relief.¹ The doctrine was certainly not understood by Lord Alvanley as going to this extent; for he put the case upon the proof of fraud arising from previous insolvency.²

§ 361. Where the conveyance is intentionally made to defraud creditors, it seems perfectly reasonable that it should be held void, as to all subsequent, as well as to all prior creditors, on account of ill faith.³ But where the conveyance is *bonâ fide* made, and under circumstances demonstrative of the non-existence of any intention to defraud any creditor, there seems to be some difficulty in perceiving how the subsequent creditors can make out any right, as against the voluntary grantees, through the equity of the antecedent creditors.⁴ Mr. Chancellor Kent, in the case above referred to,

¹ Reade v. Livingston, 3 Johns. Ch. 498, 499; Walker v. Burroughs, 1 Atk. 94; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 220, 221.

² Lush v. Wilkinson, 5 Ves. 387; s. c. cited in Kidney v. Coussmaker, 12 Ves. 150, 155. See also Copis v. Middleton, 2 Mad. 430; Reade v. Livingston, 3 Johns. Ch. 501; Stephens v. Olive, 2 Bro. Ch. 90.

³ See Reade v. Livingston, 3 Johns. Ch. 499, 501; 1 Hovend. Supp. to Vesey, Jr. p. 124 (7); Richardson v. Smallwood, Jac. Rep. 552; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 4, p. 413; Newland on Contracts, ch. 33, p. 389.

⁴ See Holloway v. Millard, 2 Mad. 419; Walker v. Burroughs, 1 Atk. 94. In Taylor v. Jones (2 Atk. 600), the Master of the Rolls manifestly proceeded upon the ground, that the conveyance was fraudulent in fact. In Stephens v. Olive (2 Bro. Ch. 92), where there were prior debts, but secured by mortgage, Lord Kenyon held the settlement good. See also George v. Millbanke, 9 Ves. 194, that a settlement, containing a provision for payment of debts, would be good against all future creditors. Lord Eldon there said: "In general cases, *primâ facie*, a voluntary settlement will be taken to be fraudulent." But this supposes that it is not conclusive of fraud; but that it is open to be rebutted. In Kidney v. Coussmaker (12 Ves. 136, 155), Sir William Grant said: "Though there has been much controversy, and a variety of decisions upon the question, whether such a settlement (a voluntary settlement) is fraudulent as to any creditors, except such as were creditors at the time, I am disposed to follow the latest decision, that of Montague v. Lord Sandwich, which is, that the settlement is fraudulent only as against such creditors as were creditors at the time." Montague v. Lord Sandwich is nowhere reported at large. It was decided in 1797, by Lord Rosslyn, and is referred to in 5 Ves. 386, and 12 Ves. 148. Mr. Chancellor Kent has said, that, in this case, "Lord Rosslyn declared a settlement void as to creditors prior to its date. There was no question of insolvency made; but it was clearly held by Lord Rosslyn in this case (see 12 Ves. 156, note) that, if the settlement be affected, as fraudulent against such prior creditors, the subject is thrown into assets, and all subsequent creditors are let in." He manifestly

after having remarked, "That there is no doubt, in any case, as to the safety and security of the *then existing* creditors," proceeded to state: "No voluntary *postnuptial* settlement was ever permitted to affect them. And the cases seem to agree, that the *subsequent* creditors are let in only in particular cases; as, where the settlement was made in contemplation of future debts; or where it is requisite to interfere and set aside the settlement in favor of the prior creditors; or where the subsequent creditor can impeach the settlement, as fraudulent, by reason of the prior indebtedment."¹ And he finally arrived at the conclusion, "That fraud, in a voluntary settlement, was an inference of law, and ought to be so, so far as it concerned *existing* debts. But that, as to subsequent debts, there is no such necessary legal presumption; and there must be a proof of fraud in fact; and the indebtedment at the time, though not amounting to insolvency, must be such as to warrant that conclusion."²

finds this remark upon the Reporter's note (a) in 12 Ves. 156. But I have not been able to ascertain that Lord Rosslyn gave any such relief, in this case, to subsequent creditors. The note in 5 Ves. 586, and 12 Ves. 148, would rather lead my mind to an opposite conclusion, that he gave relief only to *prior* creditors *pro tanto*. Mr. Atherley (Marr. Sett. ch. 13, p. 213, note 1) has expressed an unqualified dissent from this supposed opinion of Lord Rosslyn; and, in my judgment, with very great reason. Where the settlement is set aside, as an intentional fraud upon creditors, there is strong reason for holding it so, as to subsequent creditors, and to let them into the full benefit of the property. *Richardson v. Smallwood*, Jac. Rep. 532. See also *Holloway v. Millard*, 1 Mad. 414. But see *Walker v. Burroughs*, 1 Atk. 94, on this point.

¹ *Reade v. Livingston*, 3 Johns. Ch. 497, 501. See *Richardson v. Smallwood*, Jac. Rep. 552. See on the point, whether a subsequent creditor can set aside a postnuptial settlement, a learned dissertation in the *English Jurist* for January, 1844, No. 365, p. 461, 462. In *Ede v. Knowles*, 2 Younge & Coll. N. B. 172, 178, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Bruce said: "The plaintiff does not allege by his bill, that he was a creditor at the time of the settlement. I apprehend, that a deed can only be set aside as fraudulent against creditors at the instance of a person who was a creditor at the time, though when it shall have been set aside subsequent creditors may be let in." [* But where, a few days before the trial of an action of trespass, the defendant in the action executed a deed of all his property, and was subsequently committed to prison for non-payment of the costs of the action, and declared insolvent, the deed was set aside, at the instance of the creditor, as being fraudulent and void under the statute. *Barling v. Bishopp*, 6 Jur. n. s. 812; s. c. 8 W. R. 631.]

² *Reade v. Livingston*, 3 Johns. Ch. 497, 501. See *Richardson v. Smallwood*, Jac. Rep. 552; *Skarf v. Soulby*, 16 Sim. 481. [* See *Cook v. Johnson*, 1 Beasley, 51.]

§ 362. The same subject has undergone repeated discussions in the Supreme Court of the United States. The doctrine established in that court is, that a voluntary conveyance, made by a person not indebted at the time, in favor of his wife or children, cannot be impeached by subsequent creditors, upon the mere ground of its being voluntary. It must be shown to have been fraudulent, or made with a view to future debts.¹ And, on the other hand, the mere fact of indebtedment at the time does not, *per se*, constitute a substantive ground, to avoid a voluntary conveyance for fraud, even in regard to prior creditors. The question, whether it is fraudulent or not, is to be ascertained, not from the mere fact of indebtedment at the time alone, but from all the circumstances of the case. And if the circumstances do not establish fraud, then the voluntary conveyance is deemed to be above all exception. The language of the court, upon the occasion alluded to, was as follows: "A deed from a parent to a child, for the consideration of love and affection, is not absolutely void as against creditors. It may be so under circumstances. But the mere fact of being indebted to a small amount would not make the deed fraudulent, if it could be shown that the grantor was in prosperous circumstances, and unembarrassed, and that the gift to a child was a reasonable provision, according to his state and condition in life, and leaving enough for the payment of the debts of the grantor. The want of a valuable consideration may be a badge of fraud; but it is only presumptive, and not conclusive evidence of it, and may be met and rebutted by evidence on the other side."² And this language (it should be remembered) was used in a case where the conveyance was sought to be set aside by persons claiming as judgment creditors upon antecedent debts.³

¹ *Sexton v. Wheaton*, 8 Wheaton, 229, 230; *Hinde's Lessee v. Longworth*, 11 Wheaton, 199; *Bennett v. Bedford Bank*, 11 Mass. 421. See *McLaughlin v. Bank of Potomac*, 7 Howard, 220.

² *Hinde's Lessee v. Longworth*, 11 Wheat. 199. See also *Verplank v. Sterry*, 12 Johns. 536, 554, 556, 557; *Partridge v. Gopp*, Ambler, 597, 598; s. c. 1 Eden, 167, 168, 169; *Gilmore v. North American Land Co.*, Peters, C. R. 461.

³ The doctrine of the Supreme Court seems in entire coincidence with that held by Lord Mansfield, in *Cadogan v. Kennett*, Cowp. 432, 434, and *Doe v. Routledge*, Cowp. 705, 710, 711, 712. See also *Lush v. Wilkinson*, 5 Ves. 387; *Holloway v. Millard*, 1 Mad. 414; *Kidney v. Coussmaker*, 12 Ves. 155; *Sagitary v. Hide*, 2 Vern. 44. It approaches very nearly to the doctrine held in the Supreme Court of the United States, as to the construction of the statute of 27th

§ 362 a. The same doctrine seems now well established in England. In a recent case, where the very point was before the court,¹ Lord Langdale said: "There has been a little exaggeration in the arguments on both sides, as to the principle on which the court acts in such cases as these; on one side it has been assumed that the existence of any debts, at the time of the execution of the deed, would be such evidence of a fraudulent intention as to induce the court to set aside a voluntary conveyance, and oblige the court to do so under the statute of Elizabeth. I cannot think the real and just construction of the statute warrants that proposition, because there is scarcely any man who can avoid being indebted to some amount; he may intend to pay every debt as soon as it is contracted, and constantly use his best endeavors to have ample means to do so, and yet may be frequently, if not always, indebted in some small sum; there may be a withholding of claims contrary to his intention, by which he is kept indebted in spite of himself; it would be idle to allege this as the least foundation for assuming fraud, or any bad intention. On the other hand, it is said that something amounting to insolvency must be proved, to set aside a voluntary conveyance; this, too, is inconsistent with the principle of the act, and with the judgments of the most eminent judges. The evidence as to Westacott's property, when he executed the

of Elizabeth, as to subsequent purchasers; for in the other case the voluntary conveyance is not held absolutely void; but only the burden of proof to repel fraud is thrown upon the claimants under it. *Cathcart v. Robinson*, 5 Peters, 277, 280, 281. See also *Verplank v. Sterry*, 12 Johns. 536, 554, 556, 557, 558. In this last case, Mr. Justice Spencer, in delivering his opinion in the Court of Errors, held the doctrine maintained in the Supreme Court of the United States, as to creditors, in the broadest terms. "If," said he, "the person making a settlement is insolvent, or in doubtful circumstances, the settlement comes within the statute of 13th of Elizabeth, ch. 5. But, if the grantor be not indebted to such a degree as that the settlement will deprive the creditors of an ample fund for the payment of their debts, the consideration of natural love and affection will support the deed, although a voluntary one, against his creditors; for, in the language of the decisions, it is free from the imputation of fraud." *Ibid.* 577. Mr. Newland maintains the same opinion, with great strength. *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 23, p. 384, 385. Mr. Fonblanque has remarked, that, "If a conveyance or gift be of the whole, or of the greater part, of the grantor's property, such conveyance or gift would be presumed to be fraudulent; for no man can voluntarily divest himself of all, or the most of what he has, without being aware that future creditors will probably suffer by it." 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 1, ch. 4, § 12, note (a).

¹ *Townsend v. Westacott*, 2 *Beavan*, 340, 345.

settlement, I cannot rely on; it is brought forward many years after the witnesses had known it, and they speak to the value of the property without taking into consideration any charges that might be upon it; and I am not in a situation of knowing whether there were any charges upon it."

§ 363. The same doctrine has been asserted by the Supreme Court of Connecticut, in a recent case, which hinged exclusively upon the same point. It was there laid down as the unanimous opinion of the court, and there is much persuasiveness as well as reasonableness and equity in the doctrine, that, "Where there is no actual fraudulent intent, and a voluntary conveyance is made to a child, in consideration of love and affection, if the grantor is in prosperous circumstances, unembarrassed, and not considerably indebted, and the gift is a reasonable provision for the child, according to his state and condition in life, comprehending but a small portion of his estate, leaving ample funds unencumbered for the payment of his debts; then, such conveyance will be valid against conveyances (debts) existing at the time. But, though there be no fraudulent intent, yet, if the grantor was considerably indebted and embarrassed at the time, and on the eve of bankruptcy; or, if the value of the gift be unreasonable, considering the condition in life of the grantor, disproportioned to his property, and leaving a scanty provision for the payment of his debts; then, such conveyance will be void as to creditors."¹

¹ *Salmon v. Bennett*, 1 Connecticut, 525, 548 to 551; s. p. *Newland*, on Contracts, ch. 28, p. 384, 385. Mr. Chancellor Kent, in commenting on this case, says: "I have not been able to find the case in which a mere voluntary conveyance to a wife, or child, has been plainly or directly held good against the creditor at the time. The cases appear to me to be upon the point, uniformly in favor of the creditor." (*Reade v. Livingston*, 3 Johns. Ch. 504.) Mr. Atherley (*Marr. Sett.* Ch. 13, p. 212 to 219) maintains the same doctrine. He holds, that if the party is in debt at the time of settlement, it is void, as to subsequent as well as to prior creditors; and this without any reference to the amount of the debts. See note to *Bigelow's Dig.* (2d edition) p. 200, title, *Conveyance*. On the other hand, it may be asserted with some confidence, that there is no English case which pointedly decides that such a conveyance is void, merely from the circumstance that the party was indebted at the time, if the debts bore no proportion to his assets, and there was no presumption of meditated fraud. The cases cited by Mr. Chancellor Kent do not appear to me to reach the point, at least not in a form free from difficulty and obscurity. The case of *St. Amand v. The Countess of Jersey*, 1 Comyn, 255, is quite obscurely reported; but it may be gathered from that report that the grantor was deeply in-

§ 364. The same doctrine has been expressly held, on different occasions, by the judges of the Supreme Court of New York ; and debted at the time, and probably there was a strong presumption of fraud in fact. The case of *Fitzer v. Fitzer*, 2 Atk. 511, was the case of a subsequent creditor, having an assignment under the insolvent act of Geo. II. ch. 2, to compel an execution of the trusts of a deed of separation in favor of a wife. It was not the case of a voluntary conveyance held void. In *Taylor v. Jones*, 2 Atk. 600, 602, the reasoning of the Master of the Rolls certainly goes to the maintenance of the doctrine. But the judgment seems ultimately to have turned upon the point that the conveyance was fraudulent, and there was a trust in it in favor of the grantor *for life*. Some part of the doctrine of the Master of the Rolls would not now be held maintainable. The doctrine of Lord Hardwicke, in *Russell v. Hammon*, 1 Atk. 15, by no means warrants so general a conclusion. His Lordship's language, in *Walker v. Burrows*, 1 Atk. 93, though broad and sweeping, does not come up to it ; and the case turned on the Statute of Bankruptcy, 21 Jac. I. ch. 15. *Townshend v. Windham*, 2 Ves. 1, 10, 11, was the case of the execution of a power ; and Lord Hardwicke held the property assets for the payment of the debts of existing creditors. The question did not arise, whether the debtor had other estates at the time, sufficient to pay his debts ; and Lord Hardwicke treated the case as an intentional execution of the power to defraud creditors. On the other hand, the case of *Stephens v. Olive*, 2 Bro. Ch. 90, shows that the fact of indebtedness is not sufficient to set aside the conveyance, if the debt is actually secured by mortgage. Now it is somewhat difficult to distinguish between the case of a specific security for debts, and a general security, founded upon an ample fortune in the grantor. Each operates, if at all, to repel the same imputation of fraudulent intent ; and if the law makes the mere fact of indebtedness *per se* a fraud as to existing creditors, the security, in either case cannot control the presumption. The doctrine, too, of Lord Alvanley, in *Lush v. Wilkinson*, 5 Ves. 383, trenches upon the conclusiveness of the presumption. And, notwithstanding Mr. Chancellor Kent's doubts on this case, in *Reade v. Livingston*, 3 Johns. Ch. 497, 498, it has been repeatedly recognized in later cases. 12 Ves. 150, 155 ; 2 Mad. 430. It must, therefore, be admitted, that there is some difficulty in reconciling the language of the English cases, although the cases themselves may be all distinguishable from each other. The question really resolves itself into this, whether a voluntary conveyance is void against creditors, because it ultimately operates to defeat the debts of existing creditors, or whether it is void, only when, from the circumstances, the presumption fairly arises that it either was intended to defraud, or did necessarily defraud, such creditors. Sir Thomas Plumer, in *Holloway v. Millard*, 1 Mad. 417, 419, manifestly treated the statute of 13 of Eliz. as only applying to fraudulent conveyances. " This conveyance is not one of that description (*i. e.* to defraud creditors.) It is not fraudulent merely because it is voluntary. A voluntary conveyance may be made of real or personal property without any consideration whatever, and cannot be avoided by subsequent creditors, unless it be of the description mentioned in the statute, &c. Its being voluntary is *prima facie* evidence (he does not say *conclusive*), where the party is loaded with debt at the time, of an intent to defeat and defraud his creditors ; but, if

in the latest case on this subject, it has been expressly affirmed that neither a creditor, nor a purchaser, can impeach a conveyance *bonâ fide* made, founded on natural love and affection, and free from the imputation of fraud, and where the grantor had, independent of the property granted, an ample fund to satisfy his creditors. This qualification, however, was then annexed to the doctrine, that, if a fraudulent use is made of such a settlement, it may be carried back to the time when the fraud was commenced.¹

§ 365. Under this apparent diversity of judgment, it would ill become the commentator to interpose his own views as to the comparative weight of the respective judicial opinions. It may probably be found in the future, as it has been in the past, that professional opinions will continue somewhat divided upon the subject, until it shall have undergone a more searching judicial examination, not upon authority merely, but upon principle. If the question were now entirely freed from the bearing of *dicta* and opinions in earlier times, there is much reason to believe that it would settle down into the proposition (certainly most conformable to the language of the statute of 13th of Eliz.), that mere indebtedment would not *per se* establish, that a voluntary conveyance was void, even as to existing creditors, unless the other circumstances of the case justly created a presumption of fraud, actual or constructive, from the condition, state, and rank of the parties, and the direct tendency of the conveyance to impair the rights of cred-

unindebted, his disposition is good." He afterwards added: "A voluntary disposition, even in favor of a child, is not good, if the party is indebted at the time." But this must be taken in connection with his preceding remarks, as applying to a case of being *loaded* with debts. See also *Copis v. Middleton*, 2 Mad. 426, 428, 430. In *Jones v. Boulter* (1 Cox, 288, 294), Lord Ch. B. Skinner said: "There is no mention in the act (Stat. 13 Eliz.) of voluntary conveyances; and the question has always been whether, in the transaction, there has been fraud or covin. *Here were creditors at the time*, and this is said always to have been a badge of fraud. It is true that this circumstance is always strong evidence of fraud. *But if there are other circumstances in the case, that alone will not be sufficient.*" Eyre, B., is still more explicit. He said: "The 13 of Elizabeth is a wholesome law, plainly penned, and I wonder how artificial reason could puzzle it. An artificial construction has entangled courts of justice; namely, that a voluntary conveyance of a person indebted at the time is to be deemed fraudulent." See also 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, note (a).

¹ *Jackson v. Town*, 4 Cowen, 604; *Verplank v. Sterry*, 12 Johns. 536. See also *Huston's Adm'r v. Cantril*, 11 Leigh, 136.

itors.¹ In the latest English case, touching this subject, it was unequivocally held, that a voluntary deed, made in consideration of love and affection, is not necessarily void as against the creditors of the grantor, upon the common law, or the statute of Elizabeth, but that it must be shown from the actual circumstances, that the deed was fraudulent, and necessarily tended to delay or defeat creditors.²

§ 366. There is another qualification of the doctrine respecting the rights of creditors, which deserves attention in this place, not only from its practical importance in regard to the jurisdiction of courts of equity, but also from the fact that it has given rise to some diversity of judicial opinion. The point intended to be suggested is this, whether, in order to make a conveyance void, as against existing creditors, it is indispensable that it should make a transfer of property, which could be taken in execution by the creditors, or compulsorily applied to the payment of the debts of the grantor; or whether the rule equally applies to the conveyance of any property whatsoever of the grantor, although not directly so applicable to the discharge of debts.

§ 367. The English doctrine upon this subject, after various discussions, has at length settled down in favor of the former prop-

¹ See *Jones v. Boulter*, 1 Cox, 288, 294, 295; *Stephens v. Olive*, 2 Bro. Ch. 90. See also 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, note (a); *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 4, p. 412, 413; *Twyne's case*, 3 Co. 81 b.; *Newland on Contr.* ch. 23, p. 383, 384, 385, where the learned author asserts the opinion intimated in the text, in a positive manner, and maintains it by very cogent reasoning. Mr. Chancellor Kent, in his learned opinion, already noticed (3 Johns. Ch. 506), has traced out some of the analogies between the English law and the continental law on this subject, and I gladly refer the learned reader to his citations. Voet has discussed the subject in his *Commentaries*, 1 Voet, ad Pand. Lib. 39, tit. 5, § 20; Pothier, in his *Traité des Donations, entre Vifs*, § 2; and Grenier, in his *Traité des Donations*, Tom. 1, Partie 1, ch. 2, § 2, p. 253, &c. Voet holds, that the donee is liable to the existing, but not to the future, debts of the donor, when he is donee of all, or of the major part, of the donor's property: *utrum donatis omnibus bonis aut majore eorum parte*. Pothier says, that the donee of particular things is not bound to pay the existing debts of the donor, unless he knows that the donor was insolvent at the time, or that he will not have sufficient left to pay his creditors, and the donation is in fraud of his creditors. But those who are technically called *universal donees, donataires universels* (which embrace not only donees of the whole property of the donor, but of the whole of a particular kind, as movables, &c.), are liable for the existing debts of the donor, but not for his future debts.

² *Gale v. Williamson*, 8 Mees. & Welsb. 405, 409, 410, 411.

osition ; namely, that in order to make a voluntary conveyance void as to creditors, either existing or subsequent, it is indispensable, that it should transfer property, which would be liable to be taken in execution for the payment of debts. The reasoning by which this doctrine is established is, in substance that the statute of 13th of Elizabeth did not intend to enlarge the remedies of creditors, or to subject any property to execution, which was not already, in law or equity, subject to the rights of creditors. That a voluntary conveyance of property not so subject, could not be injurious to creditors, nor within the purview of the statute, because it would not withdraw any fund from their power, which the law had not already withdrawn from it. And that would be a strange anomaly, to declare that to be a fraud upon creditors, which in no respect varied their rights or remedies. Hence, it has been decided that a voluntary settlement of stock, or of choses in action, or of copyholds, or of any other property, not liable to execution, is good, whatever may be the state and condition of the party as to debts.¹

§ 368. Mr. Chancellor Kent, in a very elaborate argument, has discussed the same subject, and doubted the soundness of the reasoning by which that doctrine is attempted to be established. He maintains that, in cases of fraudulent alienations of this sort, courts of equity ought to interfere, and grant remedial justice, whether the property could be reached by an execution at law or not, for otherwise a debtor, under shelter of it, might convert all his property into stock, and settle it upon his family, in defiance of his creditors, and to the utter subversion of justice. And he further insists, that the cases antecedent to the time of Lord Thurlow, and especially in the time of Lord Hardwicke and Lord Northington, do sustain his own doctrine.²

¹ See *Dundas v. Dutens*, 1 Ves. Jr. 196 ; s. c. 2 Cox, 196 ; *McCarthy v. Gould*, 1 B. & Beatt. 390 ; *Grogan v. Cooke*, 2 B. & Beatt. 293 ; *Caillard v. Estwick*, 1 Anst. 381 ; *Nantes v. Corrock*, 9 Ves. 188, 189 ; *Rider v. Kidder*, 10 Ves. 368 ; *Guy v. Pearkes*, 18 Ves. 196, 197 ; *Cochrane v. Chambers*, 1825, MSS. cited in Mr. Blunt's note to *Horn v. Horn*, Ambler, 79 ; *Matthews v. Feaver*, 1 Cox, 278.

² *Bayard v. Hoffman*, 4 Johns. Ch. 452 to 459 ; *Edgell v. Haywood*, 3 Atk. 352. See also Mitf. Pl. by Jeremy, 115, and 1 Jac. & Walk. 371 ; *M'Durmut v. Strong*, 4 Johns. Ch. 687 ; *Spader v. Davis*, 5 Johns. Ch. 280 ; s. c. 20 Johns. 554. The cases cited by Mr. Chancellor Kent go very far to establish the doctrine which he contends for. *Taylor v. Jones* (2 Atk. 600) is a decision of the

§ 369. But, whatever may be the true doctrine, as to these critical and nice questions, it is certain that a conveyance, even if for a valuable consideration, is not, under the statute of 13th of Elizabeth, valid in point of law from that circumstance alone. It must also be *bonâ fide*; for if it be made with intent to defraud or defeat creditors, it will be void, although there may, in the strictest sense, be a valuable, nay, an adequate, consideration. This doctrine was laid down in *Twyne's case* (3 Co. 81), and it has ever since been steadily adhered to.¹ Cases have repeatedly been decided, in which persons have given a full and fair price for goods, and where the possession has been actually changed; yet being done for the purpose of defeating creditors, the transaction has been held fraudulent, and, therefore, set aside.² Thus, where a person, with knowledge of a decree against the defendant, bought the house and goods belonging to him, and gave a full price for them, the court said, that the purchase, being with a manifest view to defeat the creditor, was fraudulent, and, notwith-

Master of the Rolls, directly in point. The case of *King v. Dupine*, cited in Mr. Saunders's note to 2 Atk. 603, note 2, and reported 3 Atk. 192, 200, is strong the same way; and so is *Horn v. Horn*, Ambl. 79. Upon this latter case, Lord Thurlow is reported to have said, "The opinion in *Horn v. Horn*, is so anomalous and unfounded, that forty such opinions would not satisfy me. It would be preposterous and absurd to set aside an agreement, which, if set aside, leaves the stock in the name of a person, where you could not touch it." *Grogan v. Cooke*, 2 B. & Beatt. 233. In *Partridge v. Gopp*, Ambl. 596; s. c. 1 Eden, 163, Lord Chancellor Northington made the donees of £500 each refund in favor of creditors. But he seems to have been impressed with the opinion, that the transaction was fraudulent, or, to use his own words, that the transaction smelt of craft and experiment. The transaction was secret; and, *Dona clandestina sunt semper suspiciosa*. *Twyne's case*, 3 Co. 81. Whatever may be the true doctrine on this subject, a distinction, may perhaps, exist between cases, where a party indebted actually converts his existing *tangible property* into stock, to defraud creditors; and cases, where he becomes possessed of stock without indebtedment at the time; or, if indebted, without having obtained it by the conversion of any other tangible property. Where tangible property is converted into stock to defraud existing creditors, there may be a solid ground to follow the fund, however altered.

¹ Newland on Contr. ch. 23, p. 370, 371; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, note (a); *Cadogan v. Kennett*, Cowp. 434; *Worseley v. De Mattos*, 1 Burr. 474, 475; *McNeal v. Glenn*, 4 Maryland, 87; *Grover v. Grover*, 3 Md. Ch. Dec. 35.

² *Cadogan v. Kennet*, Cowp. 434; *Bridge v. Eggleston*, 14 Mass. 245; *Harrison v. Trustees of Phillips Academy*, 12 Mass. 456.

standing the valuable consideration, void.¹ So, if a man should know of a judgment and execution, and, with a view to defeat it, should purchase the debtor's goods, it would be void; because the purpose is iniquitous.²

§ 370. But cases of this sort are carefully to be distinguished from others, where a sale, or assignment, or other conveyance, merely amounts to giving a preference in payment to another creditor, or where the assignment or conveyance is made for the benefit of all creditors; for such a preference, or such a general assignment or conveyance, is not treated as *mala fide*, but as merely doing what the law admits to be rightful. A sale, assignment, or other conveyance, is not necessarily fraudulent because it may operate to the prejudice of a particular creditor.³ But secret preferences made to induce particular creditors to sign a general assignment, and unknown to the other creditors who execute the assignment, are treated as frauds upon such creditors.⁴

§ 371. It may be added that, although voluntary conveyances are, or may be void as to existing creditors, they are perfect and effectual as between the parties, and cannot be set aside by the grantor, if he should become dissatisfied with the transaction.⁵ It is his own folly to have made such a conveyance. They are not only valid as to the grantor, but also as to his heirs, and all other persons claiming under him in privity of estate with notice of the fraud.⁶ A conveyance of this sort (it has been said, with great truth and force) is void only as against creditors; and then only to the extent in which it may be necessary to deal with the conveyed estate for their satisfaction. To this extent, and to this only, it is treated as if it had not been made. To every other purpose it is good. Satisfy the creditor, and the conveyance stands.⁷ [And if a creditor is a party to such deed and acquiesces in it, he cannot afterwards avoid it; nor can any one claim-

¹ *Ibid.*; *Worseley v. De Mattos*, 1 Burr. 474, 575.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Holbird v. Anderson*, 5 T. R. 235; *Pickstork v. Lyster*, 3 M. & Selw. 371.

⁴ *Post*, § 378.

⁵ *Petre v. Espinasse*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 496; *Bill v. Cureton*, id. 510, 530.

⁶ *Randall v. Phillips*, 3 Mason, 378.

⁷ Sir W. Grant, in *Curtis v. Price*, 12 Ves. 103; *Worseley v. De Mattos*, 1 Burr. 474; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 222, 223; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, note (a); *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 4; *Malin v. Garnsey*, 16 Johns. 189; *Reichart v. Castelor*, 5 Binn. 109; *Drinkwater v. Drinkwater*, 4 Mass. 354.

ing under him.¹] But the assignees of a bankrupt, or an insolvent debtor, are entitled to the same rights and stand in the same predicament as the creditors themselves, and are deemed to represent them.²

§ 372. The circumstances under which a conveyance will be deemed purely voluntary, or will be deemed affected by a consideration valuable in itself, or in furtherance of an equitable obligation, are very important to be considered; but they more properly belong to a distinct treatise upon the nature and validity of settlements. It may not, however, be useless to remark, in this place, that a settlement made upon a wife after marriage is not to be treated as wholly voluntary, where it is done in performance of a duty which a court of equity would enforce. Thus, if a man should contract a marriage by stealth with a young lady having a considerable fortune in the hands of trustees, and he should afterwards make a suitable settlement upon her in consideration of that fortune, the settlement would not be set aside in favor of the creditors of the husband, since a court of equity would not suffer him to take possession of her fortune without making a suitable settlement upon her.³ It has been said that a *postnuptial* voluntary agreement by a father to make a provision for a child, will be specifically enforced in equity, as founded in moral duty.⁴ But this doctrine, although it has the support of highly respectable authorities, seems now entirely overthrown.⁵

[* § 372 a. Where a trader, in insolvent circumstances, sold his stock in trade, and, as part of the consideration, secured an annuity

¹ *Olliver v. King*, 35 Eng. Law & Eq. 312; *Baldwin v. Cawthorne*, 19 Ves. 164; *Steel v. Brown*, 1 Taunt. 381; *Harvey, ex parte*, 27 Eng. Law & Eq. 272.

² *Doe v. Ball*, 11 Mees. & Welsb. 531, 533.

³ *Post*, §§ 1372, 1373, 1377, 1415; *Moor v. Rycault*, Prec. Ch. 22, and other cases cited in 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, and note (b); id. ch. 2, § 6, note (k); *Jones v. Marsh*, Cas. T. Talb. 64; *Wheeler v. Caryll*, Amb. 121; *Jewson v. Moulson*, 2 Atk. 417; *Middlecome v. Marlow*, 2 Atk. 519; *Ward v. Shallet*, 2 Ves. 16; *Ramsden v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 304; *Arundell v. Phipps*, 10 Ves. 139; *Russell v. Hammond*, 1 Atk. 13; *Wickes v. Clark*, 8 Paige, 161.

⁴ *Ellis v. Nimmo*, Lloyd & Goold, 333. But see *Moore v. Crofton*, 3 Jones & Lat. 438; *post*, § 706, 706 a; 787, 793 b; 973. See also that a voluntary assignment of a bond is a conclusive title to the assignee against the estate of the assignor. *Fortescue v. Barnett*, 3 M. & Keen, 36, 42, 43; *ante*, § 176; *post*, § 433, note (1); *Jeffreys v. Jeffreys*, 1 Craig & Phillips, 138, 141.

⁵ See *Holloway v. Headington*, 8 Sim. 324, 325; and *Jeffreys v. Jeffreys*, 1 Craig & Phillips, 138, 141; *post*, § 433, 706, 706 a; 787, 793, 973.

during the joint lives of himself and wife, equal to one-fourth the profits, and a contingent annuity to the wife if she survived him, equal to one-sixth of the profits; the trader having died and the creditors having brought a creditor's bill; it was held that the annuity to the wife was void, as against creditors, under the statute of 13 Eliz., and that the creditors might impeach the annuity, without seeking to set aside the whole transaction.¹ But a settlement upon the wife for her own support and that of the children, made in contemplation of marriage, and where the wife had before advanced considerable sums to the husband, in expectation of subsequently becoming his wife, was held valid, as against creditors, notwithstanding the husband was in circumstances of the greatest embarrassment at the date of the settlement, and this known to the wife, and he was declared bankrupt, not long after, for an act subsequent to the marriage.² The learned Vice Chancellor here said: "Unless the court finds that the sacred nature of that consideration has been profaned, and finds that the ceremony of marriage has been resorted to as a mere pretence and cloak for fraud, and finds clear evidence that it is a fraudulent marriage, there is no case in which any settlement of property, made previous to and in consideration of marriage, has been set aside on the ground of the insolvency or embarrassed circumstances of the husband, or as fraudulent against his creditors on a subsequent bankruptcy."³

§ 372 *b*. Where the husband voluntarily executes a bill of sale of his property to secure his wife a sum of money constituting her separate estate, which he had received and invested in his business, with her knowledge and consent, and without any promise, at the time, to refund it to her, it was held the conveyance was void as to prior creditors, it not appearing that he had other property at the time of making it, to satisfy the claims of such prior creditors.⁴

¹ [* *French v. French*, 6 De G., M. & G. 95.

² *Frazer v. Thompson*, 5 Jur. N. S. 669; s. c. 1 Giff. 49.

³ *Campion v. Cotton*, 17 Vesey, 268, is here referred to as fully sustaining the recognized doctrine of the court; and *Colombine v. Penhall*, 1 Sm. & G. 228, as within the exception.

⁴ *Kuhn v. Stansfield*, 28 Md. 210; s. p. *Gardner v. Short*, 4 C. E. Green, 341; *Smith v. Vreeland*, 1 id. 198. It was held in *Schaferman v. O'Brien*, 28 Md. 565, that a *bona fide* sale of property will protect the purchaser against a judgment subsequently rendered thereon; but if the sale was merely colorable or made to avoid the debt, the assignee of the judgment recovered thereon will have all the rights of the creditor, and may pursue the property in the hands of

§ 373. In like manner, what circumstances, connected with voluntary or valuable conveyances, are badges of fraud, or raise presumptions of intentional bad faith, though very important ingredients in the exercise of equitable jurisdiction, fall rather within the scope of treatises on evidence, than of discussions touching jurisdiction.¹ It may, however, be generally stated, that whatever would at law be deemed badges of fraud, or presumptions of ill faith, will be fully acted upon in courts of equity. But, on the other hand, it is by no means to be deemed a logical conclusion, that, because a transaction could not be reached at law as fraudulent, therefore it would be equally safe against the scrutiny of a court of equity; for a court of equity requires a scrupulous good faith in transactions which the law might not repudiate. It acts

the fraudulent purchaser. And in *Cunningham v. Dwyer*, id. 299, it was held that the grantee in a deed, expressed to be for the consideration of five dollars, and which was assailed for fraud, might show that it was in fact given upon a much larger consideration, and one that was adequate and *bonâ fide*. And a conveyance of land in consideration of paying the mortgages upon it, being one-fourth its value, is held a mere voluntary conveyance, and void against creditors, except as to the amount paid by the grantee upon the mortgages. *Mead v. Combs*, 4 C. E. Green, 112. A conveyance is void as to existing creditors, when it is made upon inadequate consideration, or is not *bonâ fide*. *Layre v. Fredericks*, 1 id. 205. The distinction between existing and subsequent creditors, in reference to voluntary conveyances, is that, as to the former, fraud is an inference of law, and as to the latter there must be proof of fraud in fact. *Belford v. Crane*, 1 id. 265.

Equity will not relieve a debtor from the effect of a conveyance made to prevent his property being sacrificed, by delaying his creditors in the recovery of their dues. And no subsequent agreement to reconvey founded on such fraudulent consideration will be enforced against the grantee. *Eyre v. Eyre*, 4 C. E. Green, 42. And where an attorney in fact conveyed lands of his principal in fraud of the rights of the latter, of which the grantee was cognizant, equity will afford no aid in removing defects in such conveyance. *Howe v. Harrington*, 3 id. 495. Where a sale and delivery of goods is procured at a cash sale, by fraud and misrepresentation, without payment of the price, the title will not pass. *Hicks v. Campbell*, 4 id. 183. The mere concealment of a fact which it is important to the other party to know, and which it is the duty of the party concealing it to disclose, is a fraud against which equity will relieve where damage is thereby sustained. *Nicholson v. Janeway*, 1 id. 285. The assurance of an auctioneer at the time of sale that the vendor was all right, and that he would warrant his title, is binding upon him, either by way of contract based upon the consideration of his own interest in the sale by way of fees; or as a fraud, if he knew the title was defective, the vendor having in fact stolen the property. *Dent v. McGrath*, 3 Bush, 174.]

¹ See 1 Eq. Abridg. 148, E.; 3 Stark. on Evid. Pt. 4, p. 615 to 622; *Twyne's case*, 3 Co. 80.

upon conscience, and does not content itself with the narrower views of legal remedial justice.¹

§ 374. The question has been much discussed, how far a settlement, made after marriage, in pursuance of an asserted parol agreement before marriage, is valid, as against creditors, in cases affected by the Statute of Frauds. There is no doubt, that such a settlement, made in pursuance of a prior valid written agreement, would be completely effectual against creditors. But the difficulty is, whether such a settlement, executed in pursuance of a parol contract, obligatory *in foro conscientie*, ought to be protected, when made, although it might not be capable of being enforced, if not made. It is certain that the mere performance of a moral duty even of the most meritorious nature, has not been deemed sufficient to protect a voluntary conveyance, even in favor of a deeply injured party, to whom it is designed to be a compensation for injustice and deceit.² And hence the difficulty is increased of giving effect to a contract, which, in its own character, although founded upon an intrinsic valuable consideration, is yet, in contemplation of law, deemed to be a *nudum pactum*. There have been some struggles in courts of equity to maintain the efficacy of such a *postnuptial* settlement against creditors, where it purported to be founded upon a parol agreement before marriage, recited in the settlement. But the strong inclination of these courts now seems to be, to consider such a settlement incapable of support from any evidence of a parol contract; since it is in effect an attempt to supersede the Statute of Frauds, and to let in all the mischiefs against which that statute was intended to guard the public generally, and especially to guard creditors.³ [* The mem-

¹ See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 2, § 8, notes; *id.* ch. 3, § 4; *id.* ch. 4, § 12, 13, and notes.

² *Gilham v. Locke*, 9 Ves. 612; *Lady Cox's case*, 3 P. Will. 339; *Priest v. Parrott*, 2 Ves. 160.

³ See *Atherley on Marr. Sett.* ch. 9, p. 149. According to Mr. Cox's report of *Dundas v. Dutens* (2 Cox, 235), Lord Thurlow actually held such a settlement valid, asserting that it could not be deemed fraudulent, and that the cases, though they had gone a great way in treating settlements after marriage as fraudulent, had never gone to such a length as that. Mr. Cox having been of counsel in that case, his report is probably accurate. The point is not quite so strongly stated in the report of the same case in 1 Ves. Jr. 196. But Lord Thurlow is there made in effect to say: "If the husband made an agreement before marriage, that he would settle, and then, in fraud of the agreement, got married, that he would be

orandum, to take a case out of the Statute of Frauds, must contain, not only a description of the property, and the price, but the names of the parties to be bound by the contract; and the defect will not be supplied by correspondence between the parties, from which these facts are obviously implied.¹]

§ 375. The same policy, of affording protection to the rights of creditors, pervades the provisions of the statute of 3d and 4th of William and Mary, ch. 14, respecting devises in fraud of creditors, and of the statutes made in the American States *in pari*

bound by the agreement; and he thought there was a case in point. That it would be a kind of fraud, against which the court would relieve. If there was a *parol* agreement for a settlement upon marriage, after marriage a suit upon the ground of part-performance would not do, because the statute is expressed in that manner. And he then asked the question, whether there was any case where, in the settlement, the parties recite an agreement before marriage, in which it has been considered as within the statute?" The distinction between cases of fraud and a mere reliance upon a *parol* agreement for a settlement before marriage and in consideration thereof, is expressly taken in *Lady Montacute v. Maxwell* (1 P. Will. 619, 620); s. c. *Preced. in Ch.* 526; 1 Str. 236; 1 Eq. Cas. Abr. p. 19, pl. 4, where the Lord Chancellor said: "In cases of fraud, equity should relieve, even against the words of the statute, &c. But where there is no fraud, only relying upon the honor, word, or promise of the defendant, the statute making these promises void, equity will not interfere." 1 Ves. Jr. 199, note (a); *post*, § 768. This may be correct in cases of *parol* promises in consideration of marriages, for the Statute of Frauds (29 Car. II. ch. 3, § 4), expressly declares, that no action shall be brought, whereby "to charge any person upon an agreement made in consideration of marriage," unless the agreement shall be in writing and signed by the party to be charged therewith; for in such a case it seems to have been held, that the marriage is not a part-performance to take the case out of the statute. See *Montacute v. Maxwell*, *ibid.*; *Dundas v. Dutens*, 1 Ves. Jr. 196; s. c. 2 Cox, 235; *Redding v. Wilkes*, 3 Bro. Ch. 400, 401; *Taylor v. Beech*, 1 Ves. 297, 298. All this seems perfectly correct. But suppose the party to have fulfilled his *parol* promise after marriage, ought a court of equity to disturb the settlement in favor of creditors? The marriage, in such a case, is not the less a valuable consideration, because a *parol* promise was relied on; and if relied on as valid, and the marriage is had on the faith thereof, is not the non-fulfilment of it a fraud upon the other party, whether intentional or not? Mr. Chancellor Kent, in *Reade v. Livingston* (3 Johns. Ch. 481), after reviewing the authorities, has come to a conclusion unfavorable to the validity of such a settlement. Sir William Grant, in *Randall v. Morgan* (12 Ves. 67), seemed to think the question not settled. An anonymous case in *Preced. in Ch.* 101, is in favor of such a settlement. See also *Ramsden v. Hylton*, 2 Ves. 308, the remarks of Lord Hardwicke. See also *Lavender v. Blackstone*, 2 Lev. 146, 147; 1 Vent. 194; *Guchenback v. Rose*, 4 Watts & Serg. 546.

¹ [* *Skelton v. Cole*, 1 De Gex & Jones, 587.]

materia.¹ There is an apparent anomaly in equity jurisprudence upon this subject, not easily reconcilable with sound principles. The statute of William and Mary is confined to fraudulent devises; and, therefore, fraudulent conveyances, whether voluntary or not, are not reached by it. And, hence, it has been adjudged in England, that, if a man makes a conveyance of lands in his lifetime, in order to defraud his creditors, and dies, his bond creditors have no right to set aside the conveyance; for the statute (it is said) was only designed to secure such creditors against any imposition, which might be supposed in a man's last sickness. But, if he gave away his effects in his lifetime, this prevented the descent of so much to the heir; and, consequently, took away their remedy against the heir, who was liable only in respect to land descended. And as a bond is no lien whatever on lands in the hands of the obligor, much less can it be so when they are given away to a stranger.² This doctrine has been strongly questioned; and, at the time when it was promulgated, gave great dissatisfaction.³ And, hence, we may see the reason why voluntary conveyances of lands cannot be set aside, except by creditors, who have reduced their debts to judgment before the death of the party; for, until that time, they constitute no lien on the land.⁴

§ 376. In America, however, the policy of the legislature has taken a much wider and more effectual range to obtain its objects. Generally, if not universally, lands and other hereditaments are with us made assets for the payment of debts, as auxiliary to the personal property of the deceased. And, if the party, in his lifetime, has fraudulently conveyed his estate, with a view to defeat his creditors upon his decease, the real assets are subject to the same disposition as if no such conveyance had been made.⁵ The French law seems to have proceeded upon a policy equally broad

¹ See 1 Roberts on Wills, ch. 1, § 20; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 4, p. 415, 416; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 14, note (i).

² Parslow v. Weaden, 1 Eq. Abridg. 14, Pl. 7; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, 14, and note (l).

³ Ibid.; and Jones v. Marsh, Cas. T. Talb. 64.

⁴ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12; Gilb. Lex Prætorica, p. 293, 294; Colman v. Croker, 1 Ves. Jr. 160. See Bean v. Smith, 2 Mason, 282 to 285. See Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 126, 127; Jackson v. Caldwell, 1 Cowen, 622. But see Lister v. Turner, 5 Hare, 281.

⁵ See Drinkwater v. Drinkwater, 4 Mass. 354. Wildridge v. Patterson, 15 Mass. 148.

and salutary ; and has enabled creditors, in cases of insolvency, to rescind alienations, either voluntary, or in fraud of their rights.¹

§ 377. These cases of interposition in favor of creditors, being founded upon the provisions of positive statutes, a question was made at an early day whether they were exclusively cognizable at law ; or they could be carried into effect also in equity. The jurisdiction of courts of equity is now firmly established ; for it extends to cases of fraud, whether provided against by statute or not. And, indeed, the remedial justice of a court in equity, in many cases arising under these statutes, is the only effectual one which can be administered ; as that of courts of law must often fail, from the want of adequate powers to reach or redress the mischief.²

§ 378. There are other cases of constructive frauds against creditors, which the wholesome moral justice of the law has equally discredited and denounced. We refer to that not unfrequent class of cases, in which, upon the failure or insolvency of their debtors, some creditors have, by secret compositions, obtained undue advantages, and thus decoyed other innocent and unsuspecting creditors into signing deeds of composition, which they supposed to be founded upon the basis of entire equality and reciprocity among all the creditors ; when, in fact, there was a designed or actual imposition upon all but the favored few. The purport of a composition or trust-deed, in cases of insolvency, usually is, that the property of the debtor shall be assigned to trustees, and shall be collected and distributed by them among the creditors, according to the order and terms prescribed in the deed itself. And, in consideration of the assignment, the creditors, who become parties, generally agree to release all their debts, beyond what the funds will satisfy. Now, it is obvious, that in all transactions of this sort, the utmost good faith is required ; and the very circumstance that other creditors, of known reputation and standing, have already become parties to the deed, will operate as a strong inducement to others to act in the same way. But, if the signatures of such prior creditors have been procured by secret arrangements with them, more favorable to them than the general terms of the

¹ Pothier on Oblig. n. 153.

² Jeremy on Equity Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 4, p. 408, 409 ; id. ch. 4 ; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12, and note (c) ; id. § 14, notes (i) and (k) ; 1 Eq. Abridg. 149, E. 6 ; *White v. Hussey*, Preced. in Ch. 14.

composition deed warrant, those creditors really act (as has been said by a very significant, although a homely figure) as decoy-ducks upon the rest. They hold out false colors to draw in others, to their loss or ruin.

§ 379. In modern times, the doctrine has been acted upon in courts of law, as it has long been in courts of equity, that such secret arrangements are utterly void, and ought not to be enforced, even against the assenting debtor, or his sureties, or his friends.¹ There is great wisdom, and deep policy, in the doctrine; and it is found in the best of all protective policy, that which acts by way of precaution, rather than by mere remedial justice; for it has a strong tendency to suppress all frauds upon the general creditors, by making the cunning contrivers the victims of their own illicit and clandestine agreements. The relief is granted not for the sake of the debtor, for no deceit or oppression may have been practised upon him; but for the sake of honest, and humane, and unsuspecting creditors. And, hence, the relief is granted equally, whether the debtor has been induced to agree to the secret bargain by the threats or oppression of the favored creditors, or whether he has been a mere volunteer, offering his services, and aiding in the intended deception. Such secret bargains are not only deemed incapable of being enforced or confirmed, but even money paid under them is recoverable back, as it has been obtained against the clear principles of public policy.² And it is wholly immaterial, whether such secret bargains give to the favored creditors a larger sum, or an additional security or advantage, or only misrepresent some important fact; for the effect upon other creditors is precisely the same in each of these cases. They are misled into an act, to which they might not otherwise have assented.³

¹ *Chesterfield v. Janssen*, 1 Atk. 352; 1 Ves. 155, 156; 3 P. Will. 131; Cox's note; *Spurrett v. Spiller*, 1 Atk. 105; *Jackman v. Mitchell*, 13 Ves. 581; *Smith v. Bromley*, Doug. 696, note; *Jones v. Barkley*, id. 695, note; *Cockshott v. Bennett*, 2 T. R. 763; *Jackson v. Lomas*, 4 T. R. 166; *Fawcett v. Gee*, 4 Anst. 910.

² *Smith v. Bromley*, Doug. 696, note; *Jones v. Barkley*, id. 695, note; *Jackman v. Mitchell*, 13 Ves. 581; *Ex parte Sadler and Jackson*, 15 Ves. 55; *Mawson v. Stock*, 6 Ves. 300; *Yeomans v. Chatterton*, 9 Johns. 294; *Wiggin v. Bush*, 12 Johns. 306.

³ *Ibid.*; *Eastabrook v. Scott*, 3 Ves. 456; *Constantine v. Blache*, 1 Cox, 287; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 11, note (x); *Cullingworth v. Lloyd*, 2 Beav. 385, and the learned note of the Reporter, p. 390; *Leicester v. Rose*, 4 East, 372. In *Cullingworth v. Lloyd*, Lord Langdale said: "It must be observed that Ed-

§ 380. For the like reasons, any agreement, made by an insolvent debtor with his assignee, by which the estate of the insolvent is to be held in trust by the assignee, to secure certain benefits for himself and his family, such as to pay certain annuities to himself and his wife, out of the rents or proceeds of the property assigned, and to apply the surplus to the extinction of debt due to the assignee, will be held void, and will be rescinded, upon the ground of public policy, whenever it comes before a court of equity, even though the suit happen to be at the instance of the insolvent himself. For it is a contrivance in fraud of creditors, to which the assignee, who is, or ought to be, a trustee for them, is a party.¹

§ 381. In concluding this discussion, so far as it regards creditors, it is proper to be remarked, that although voluntary and other conveyances, in fraud of creditors, are thus declared to be utterly void; yet, they are so, only so far as the original parties and their privies, and others claiming under them, who have notice of the fraud, are concerned. For *bonâ fide* purchasers for a valuable consideration, without notice of the fraudulent or voluntary grant, are of such high consideration, that they will be protected, as well at law as in equity, in their purchases.² It would be plainly inequitable, that a party who has, *bonâ fide*, paid his money upon the faith of a good title, should be defeated by any creditor of the original grantor, who has no superior equity, since

mund Grundy was winding up the business under a power of attorney, which enabled him to pay the debts by an equal pound rate; but it does not appear, that there was any general meeting of the creditors, or any agreement entered into by the creditors generally. The advertisements, however, show a proposition to the creditors at large to pay them all a composition on certain terms; and although every creditor was at liberty to refuse the composition, it is established by a series of decisions, that a creditor cannot ostensibly accept such composition and sign the deed, which expresses his acceptance of the terms, and at the same time stipulate for, or secure to himself a peculiar and separate advantage, which is not expressed upon the deed; and in the case of *Leicester v. Rose* (4 East, 372), it is stated by Mr. Justice Le Blanc, that in the consideration of cases of this nature, it is not material whether the agreement be entered into at a meeting of all the creditors assembled for the purpose, or impliedly by their affixing their signatures to the same deed, carried round or produced to each separately, and signed by them; those who, by executing the deed, hold out that they come in under the general agreement, are not permitted to stipulate for a further partial benefit to themselves."

¹ *McNiel v. Cahill*, 2 Bligh, 228.

² *Ante*, § 64 c, 108, 139, 165; *post*, § 409, 434, 436.

it would be impossible for him to guard himself against such latent frauds. The policy of the law, therefore, which favors the security of titles, as conducive to the public good, would be subverted, if a creditor, having no lien upon the property, should yet be permitted to avail himself of the priority of his debt, to defeat such a *bonâ fide* purchaser. Where the parties are equally meritorious, and equally innocent, the known maxim of courts of equity is, *Qui prior est in tempore, potior est in jure*; he is to be preferred, who has acquired the first title.¹ This point, however, will naturally present itself in other aspects, when we come to the consideration of the general protection, afforded by courts of equity, to purchasers standing in such a predicament.

§ 382. Other underhand agreements, which operate as a fraud upon third persons, may easily be suggested, to which the same remedial justice has been applied. Thus, where a father, upon the marriage of his daughter, entered into a covenant, that upon his death he would leave her certain tenements, and that he would, also by his will, give and leave her a full and equal share, with her brother and sister, of all his personal estate; and he afterwards, during his life, transferred to his son a very large portion of his personal property, consisting of public stock, but retained the dividends for his life; it was held, that the transfer was void, as a fraud upon the marriage articles; and the son was compelled to account for the same.² Covenants of this nature are proper in themselves, and ought to be honorably observed. They ought not to be, and indeed are not, construed to prohibit the father from making, during his lifetime, any dispositions of his personal property among children, more favorable to one than another. But they do prohibit him from doing any acts which are designed to defeat and defraud the covenant. He may, if he pleases, make a gift *bonâ fide* to a child; but then it must be an absolute and unqualified gift, which surrenders all his own interest, and not a

¹ See *Dame Burg's case*, Moore, 602; *Woodcock's case*, 33 H. 6, 14; *Predgers v. Langham*, 1 Sid. 133; *Wilson and Wormal's case*, Godbolt, 161; *Bean v. Smith*, 1 Mason, 272 to 282; *Anderson v. Roberts*, 18 Johns. 513; *Fletcher v. Peck*, 6 Cranch, 133, 134; *Daubeney v. Cockburn*, 1 Meriv. 638, 639; *Ledyard v. Butler*, 9 Paige, 132.

² *Jones v. Martin*, 3 Anst. 882; s. c. 5 Ves. 265. See also *Randall v. Willis*, 5 Ves. 261; 8 Brown, Parl. 242, by Tomlins; *McNiell v. Cahill*, 2 Bligh, 228. See *Stocken v. Stocken*, 4 Mylne & Craig, 95.

mere reversionary gift, which saves the income to himself during his own life.¹

§ 383. So if a friend should advance money to purchase goods for another, or to relieve another from the pressure of his necessities, and the other parties interested should enter into a private agreement over and beyond that with which the friend is made acquainted; such an agreement will be void at law, as well as in equity; for the friend is drawn in to make the advance by false colors held out to him, and under a supposition that he is acquainted with all the facts.² So the guaranty of the payment of a debt, procured from a friend upon the suppression by the parties of material circumstances, is a virtual fraud upon him, and avoids the contract.³

§ 384. Another class of constructive frauds of a large extent, and over which courts of equity exercise an exclusive and very salutary jurisdiction, consists of those where a man designedly or knowingly produces a false impression upon another, who is thereby drawn into some act or contract, injurious to his own rights or interests.⁴ This subject has been partly treated before; but it should be again brought under our notice in this connection.⁵ No man can reasonably doubt, that if a party, by the wilful suggestion of a falsehood, is the cause of prejudice to another, who has a right to a full and correct representation of the fact, his claim ought in conscience to be postponed to that of the person whose confidence was induced by his representation. And there can be no real difference between an express representation, and one that is naturally or necessarily implied from the circumstances.⁶ The wholesome maxim of the law upon this subject is, that a party who enables another to commit a fraud, is answerable for the consequences;⁷ and, the maxim so often cited *Fraus est celare*

¹ Ibid.

² *Jackson v. Duchaise*, 3 T. R. 551.

³ *Pidcock v. Bishop*, 3 B. & Cressw. 605; *Smith v. Bank of Scotland*, 1 Dow, Parl. 272. See *Owen v. Homan*, 3 Eng. Law & Eq. 121; 25 id. 1; *Squire v. Whitton*, 1 House of Lords Cases, 333; *ante*, § 215.

⁴ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 W. 28; *Bean v. Smith*, 2 Mason, 285, 286; 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 256, 257; *ante*, § 191, &c.

⁵ *Ante*, § 192 to 204.

⁶ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 4, notes (m) and (n); Sugden on Vendors, ch. 16.

⁷ Bac. Max. 16.

fraudem, is, with proper limitations in its application, a rule of general justice.

§ 385. In many cases, a man may innocently be silent; for, as has often been observed, *Aliud est tacere, aliud celare*. But, in other cases, a man is bound to speak out; and his very silence becomes as expressive as if he had openly consented to what is said or done, and had become a party to the transaction.¹ Thus, if a man, having a title to an estate, which is offered for sale, and knowing his title, stands by and encourages the sale, or does not forbid it, and thereby another person is induced to purchase the estate, under the supposition that the title is good, the former, so standing by, and being silent, will be bound by the sale, and neither he nor his privies will be at liberty to dispute the validity of the purchase.² So, if a man should stand by, and see another person, as grantor, execute a deed of conveyance of land belonging to himself, and, knowing the facts, should sign his name as a witness, he would in equity be bound by the conveyance.³ So, if a

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 4, and notes (*m*) and (*n*); *Savage v. Foster*, 9 Mod. 35; Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 I. 3, 4 W. 28; *Hanning v. Ferrers*, 1 Eq. Abridg. 356, pl. 10; *ante*, § 204 to 220.

² *Ibid.*; *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 166, 169 to 172; *Wendell v. Van Rensselaer*, 1 Johns. Ch. 354. Courts of Law now act upon the same enlightened principles in regard to personal property, in the transfer of which no technical formalities usually intervene to prevent the application of them. Thus, where it appeared that certain goods of the plaintiff were seized on an execution against a third person (in whose possession they were) and sold to the defendant and the plaintiff made no objection to the sale, though he had full notice of it; it was held that the facts ought to be left to the jury to consider, whether he had not assented to the sale, and ceased to be the owner of the property. On this occasion, Lord Denman, in delivering the opinion of the court, said: "The rule of law is clear, that where one, by his words or conduct, wilfully causes another to believe in the existence of a certain state of things, and induces him to act on that belief so as to alter his own previous position, the former is concluded from averring against the latter a different state of things, as existing at the same time; and the plaintiff might have parted with his interest in the property by verbal gift or sale, without any of those formalities that throw technical obstacles in the way of legal evidence. And we think his conduct, in standing by and giving a sort of sanction to the proceedings under the execution, was a fact of such a nature, that the opinion of the jury ought, in conformity to *Heane v. Rogers* (9 B. & Cressw. 586), and *Graves v. Key* (3 Barn. & Adol. 318, note *a*), to have been taken, whether he had not in point of fact ceased to be the owner." *Pickard v. Sears*, 6 Adolph. & Ellis, 474.

³ *Teasdale v. Teasdale*, Sel. Ch. Cas. 59; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 5, ch. 3, § 4, note (*m*).

party having a title to an estate, should stand by, and allow an innocent purchaser to expend money upon the estate, without giving him notice, he would not be permitted by a court of equity to assert that title against such purchaser, at least not without fully indemnifying him for all his expenditures.¹ The same rule has been applied both at law and in equity, where the owner of chattels, with a full knowledge of his own title, has permitted another person to deal with these chattels as his own, in his transactions with third persons, who have bargained and acted in the confidence that the chattels were the property of the person with whom they dealt; for, in cases where one of two innocent persons must suffer a loss, and *à fortiori*, in cases where one has misled the other, he, who is the cause or occasion of that confidence by which the loss has been caused or occasioned, ought to bear it.² Indeed, cases of this sort are viewed with so much disfavor by courts of equity, that neither infancy nor coverture will constitute any excuse for the party guilty of the concealment or misrepresentation; for neither infants nor *femes covert* are privileged to practise deception or cheats on other innocent persons.³

[* § 385 a. And a *feme covert* is held bound by an election under a decree against the husband, obtained in a suit instituted by her next friend, upon the ground that the contrary doctrine would enable her to turn her disability to a fraudulent advantage.⁴ And where an infant in contemplation of marriage represented himself of full age, ignorantly as he claimed, and entered into a covenant, by way of settlement upon his intended wife, to pay to trustees named the agreed value of her stock in business, for her separate use and that of her children by a former marriage; and in confidence of such covenant took possession of the stock, and continued the business some years after he became of age, when the wife died; and upon the trustees claiming performance of the covenants, he answered that he was not liable, by reason of infancy; it was

¹ See *Cawdor v. Lewis*, 1 Younge & Coll. 427; *The Chautaque County Bank v. White*, 6 Barbour, 590; *post*, § 388.

² *Nicholson v. Hooper*, 4 Mylne & Craig, 179; *Pickard v. Sears*, 6 Adolph. & Ellis, 474, *supra*.

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 4; *Savage v. Foster*, 9 Mod. 35; *Evroy v. Nichols*, 2 Eq. Abridg. 489; *Clare v. Earl of Bedford*, cited 2 Vern. 150, 151; *Becket v. Cordley*, 1 Bro. Ch. 357; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 16, p. 262, 9th edit.; *post*, § 387 to 390. See *Bright v. Boyd*, 1 Story, 478.

⁴ [* *Barrow v. Barrow*, 4 Kay & Johnson, 409.

held, on the ground of misrepresentation and also of acquiescence, that the defendant could not set up the plea of infancy in bar of the covenant.^{1]}

§ 386. In order, however, to justify the application of this cogent moral principle, it is indispensable that the party so standing by and concealing his rights should be fully apprised of them, and should, by his conduct or gross negligence, encourage or influence the purchase; for if he is wholly ignorant of his rights, or the purchaser knows them; or, if his acts, or silence, or negligence, do not mislead, or in any manner affect the transaction, there can be no just inference of actual or constructive fraud on his part.² [For a right can be lost or forfeited only by such conduct as would make it fraudulent and against conscience to assert it.³]

§ 387. There are, indeed, cases, where even ignorance of title will not excuse a party; for, if he actually misleads the purchaser by his own representations, although innocently, the maxim is justly applied to him, that, where one of two innocent persons must suffer, he shall suffer, who, by his own acts, occasioned the confidence and the loss.⁴ Thus, where a tenant in tail, under a settlement, encouraged a stranger to purchase an annuity, charged on the land by his father's will, from a younger brother, and said, that he believed his brother had a good title; he was compelled to make good the annuity, notwithstanding his ignorance of his own title under the settlement, and of the annuity's being invalid; for, under the circumstances of the case, there was negligence on his part in not instituting proper inquiries, he having heard that there had been a settlement.⁵ So, where a mother, who was a tenant in tail, and absolute owner of a term of years, was present at a treaty for her son's marriage, and heard her son declare that the term was to come to him after the death of the mother; and she became a witness to a deed, whereby the son took upon himself to settle the reversion of the term, expectant on his mother's death, upon the issue of the marriage; and the mother did not

¹ *Nelson v. Stocker*, 5 Jur. N. S. 262; s. c. 28 L. J. N. S. Ch. 751.]

² See 2 Hovend. on Frauds, ch. 22, p. 184.

³ *Devereux v. Bengwyn*, 5 Iredell, Eq. 351.

⁴ See *Neville v. Wilkinson*, 1 Bro. Ch. 546; 3 P. Will. 74, Mr. Cox's note; *Scott v. Scott*, 1 Cox, 378, 379, 380; *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 173, 182, 183, 184; *Pearson v. Morgan*, 2 Bro. Ch. 388; Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 W. 28.

⁵ *Hobbs v. Norton*, 1 Vern. 136; 1 Eq. Abridg. 356, Pl. 8.

insist upon more than a life-estate therein ; she was held bound to make good the title, notwithstanding it was insisted that she was ignorant that as tenant in tail she had an absolute power to dispose of it.¹

§ 388. Another case, illustrative of the same doctrine, may be put, arising from the expenditure of money upon another man's estate, through inadvertence, or a mistake of title.² As, for instance, if a man, supposing he has an absolute title to an estate, should build upon the land, with the knowledge of the real owner, who should stand by and suffer the erections to proceed, without giving any notice of his own claim ; he would not be permitted to avail himself of such improvements, without paying a full compensation therefor ; for, in conscience, he was bound to disclose the defect of title to the builder.³ Nay, a court of equity might, under circumstances, go further, and oblige the real owner to permit the person making such improvements on the ground to enjoy it quietly and without disturbance.⁴

§ 389. And, upon the like principle, if a person, having a conveyance of land, keeps it secret for several years, and knowingly suffers third persons afterwards to purchase parts of the same premises from his grantor, who remains in possession, and is the reputed owner, and to expend money on the land, without notice of his claim, he will not be permitted afterwards to assert his legal title against such innocent and *bond fide* purchasers. To allow him to assert his title under such circumstances, would be to counte-

¹ *Hunsden v. Cheney*, 2 Vern. 150 ; *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 166, 168, 173, 174. See also *Beverly v. Beverly*, 2 Vern. 133 ; *Redman v. Redman*, 1 Vern. 347 ; *Scott v. Scott*, 1 Cox, 366, 378 ; *Raw v. Potts*, 2 Vern. 239 ; *Savage v. Foster*, 9 Mod. 35 ; 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 210, 211 ; *Bac. Abridg. I. Fraud*, B. ; *Raw v. Potts*, *Preced. Ch.* 35 ; *Brinckerhoff v. Lansing*, 4 Johns. Ch. 65, 70.

² *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4, I. 3 ; *ante*, § 385 ; *post*, § 799 a, 799 b, 1237, 1238, 1239.

³ *Pilling v. Armitage*, 12 Ves. 84, 85. See *Wells v. Banister*, 4 Mass. 514 ; *Bright v. Boyd*, 1 Story, 478.

⁴ *East India Company v. Vincent*, 2 Atk. 83 ; *Dann v. Spurrier*, 7 Ves. 231, 235 ; *Jackson v. Cator*, 5 Ves. 688 ; *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 168, 169 ; *Shannon v. Bradstreet*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 73. The civil law carried its doctrine, in cases of this sort, much further ; for, in all cases where improvements were *bond fide* made upon any estate by a purchaser or other person, innocently, and under a belief that he was the true owner of the estate, he was entitled to a compensation for the benefit actually conferred upon the estate. See *Bright v. Boyd*, 1 Story, 478, 494, 495, 496 ; *post*, § 799 a, 799 b, 1237, 1238, 1239.

nance fraud and injustice; and the conscience of the party is bound by an equitable estoppel; for in such a case, it is emphatically true,— *Qui tacet, consentire videtur; qui potest et debet vetare, jubet, si non vetat.*¹

§ 390. A more common case, illustrative of the same doctrine, is, where a person, having an encumbrance or security upon an estate, suffers the owner to procure additional money upon the estate by way of lien or mortgage, concealing his prior encumbrance or security. In such a case he will be postponed to the second encumbrancer; for it would be inequitable to allow him to profit by his own wrong in concealing his claim, and thus lending encouragement to the new loan.² Thus, if a prior mortgagee, who knows that another person is about to lend money on the mortgaged property; should deny that he had a mortgage, or should assert that it was satisfied, he would be postponed to the second mortgagee, who should lend his money on the fault of the representations so made.³ So, if a prior mortgagee, whose mortgage is not registered, should be a witness to a subsequent mortgage or conveyance of the same property, knowing the contents of the deed, and should not disclose his prior encumbrance, he would be postponed or barred of his title.⁴ Such transactions may well explain the maxim, *fraus est celare fraudem.*

[* § 390 a. So where one puts the evidence of his lien into the debtor's hands, so as to enable him to represent it as extinguished, and thereby gain further credit upon the mortgage of the same property, the first lien will be postponed to the subsequent one.⁵ But where one gives his broker blank transfers of certain shares of railway stock, and the broker fraudulently inserts different shares, of greater value, and delivers such transfers to a *bonâ fide* pur-

¹ *Wendell v. Van Rensselaer*, 1 Johns. Ch. 354; 2 Inst. 146, 305; *Branch's Max.* 181, 185; *Hanning v. Ferrers*, 1 Eq. Abridg. 357; *Storrs v. Barker*, 6 Johns. Ch. 166, 168; *Bright v. Boyd*, 1 Story, 478; *ante*, 385.

² *Draper v. Borlace*, 2 Vern. 370; *Clare v. Earl of Bedford*, cited 2 Vern. 150, 151; *Mocatta v. Murgatroyd*, 1 P. Will. 393, 394; *Berrisford v. Milward*, 2 Atk. 49; *Becket v. Cordley*, 1 Bro. Ch. 353, 357; *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 173, 182, 183; *Pearson v. Morgan*, 2 Bro. Ch. 385, 388; *Plumb v. Fluit*, 2 Anst. 432; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, 4, note (u); *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 16; *Lee v. Munroe*, 7 Cranch, 368.

³ *Lee v. Munroe*, 7 Cranch, 366, 368.

⁴ *Brinckerhoff v. Lansing*, 4 Johns. Ch. 65.

⁵ [* *Perry-Herrick v. Attwood*, 2 De Gex & J. 21.

chaser, it is only a good transfer to the extent for which it was made, the purchaser being put upon his inquiry by seeing the deeds in blank, and the mode of conveyance being regarded as inoperative at law; the deed being executed and delivered in blank, it was held that legal title, and an equal equity remaining in the seller, shall prevail over the mere equity of the purchaser.^{1]}

§ 391. In all this class of cases, the doctrine proceeds upon the ground of constructive fraud, or of gross negligence, which in effect implies fraud. And, therefore, where the circumstances of the case repel any such inference, although there may be some degree of negligence, yet courts of equity will not grant relief.² It has, accordingly, been laid down by a very learned judge, that the cases on this subject go to this result only, that there must be positive fraud, or concealment, or negligence, so gross as to amount to constructive fraud.³ And, if the intention be fraudulent, although not exactly pointing to the object accomplished; yet the party will be bound to the same extent as if it had been exactly so pointed.⁴

§ 392. Upon the same principles, if a trustee should permit the title-deeds of the estate to go out of his possession for the purpose of fraud; and, intending to defraud one person, he should defraud another, courts of equity will grant relief against him.⁵ So, if a bond should be given upon an intended marriage, and to aid it; and the marriage with that person should afterwards go off, and another marriage should take place upon the credit of that bond; the bond would bind the party in the same way as it would if the original marriage had taken effect.⁶

§ 393. What circumstances will amount to undue concealment, or to misrepresentation, in cases of this sort, is a point more fit for a treatise of evidence, than for one of mere jurisdiction. But it has been held, that a first mortgagee's merely allowing the

¹ *Taylor v. Great Indian Peninsula Railw. Co.*, 5 Jur. N. s. 1087.]

² *Tourle v. Rand*, 2 Bro. Ch. 652; 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 256, 257.

³ *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 190, 191, 192; *Merewether v. Shaw*, 2 Cox, 124. See *Hewitt v. Loosemore*, 9 Eng. Law & Eq. 35; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 16, p. 262, &c. (9th edit.).

⁴ *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 191, 192; *Beckett v. Cordley*, 1 Bro. Ch. 357; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 4; *Plumb v. Fluitt*, 2 Anst. 432, 440.

⁵ *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 174, 191; *Clifford v. Brooke*, 13 Ves. 132.

⁶ See *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 191.

mortgagor to have the title-deeds, or a first mortgagee's witnessing a second mortgage-deed, but not knowing the contents, or even concealing from a second mortgagee information of a prior mortgage, when he made application therefor, the intention of the party applying to lend money not being made known, are not of themselves sufficient to affect the first mortgagee with constructive fraud.¹ There must be other ingredients to give color and body to these circumstances; for they may be compatible with entire innocence of intention and object.² Nothing but a voluntary, distinct, and unjustifiable concurrence on the part of the first mortgagee, in the mortgagor's retaining the title-deeds, is now deemed a sufficient reason for postponing his priority. And, in regard to the other acts above stated, they must be done under circumstances

¹ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 1, ch. 2, § 2, p. 193, 194, 195; 1 Mad. Ch. Pr. 429 to 431; id. 256; *Plumb v. Fluitt*, 2 Anst. 432; *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 174; *Cothay v. Sydenham*, 2 Bro. Ch. 391; *West v. Reid*, 2 Hare, 249, 259. In this last case Mr. Vice-Chancellor Wigram said: "In short, let the doctrine of constructive notice be extended to all cases (it is, in fact, more confined in *Plumb v. Fluitt*, *Evans v. Bicknell*, *Cothay v. Sydenham*, and other cases), but let it be extended to all cases in which the purchaser has notice that the property is affected, or has notice of facts raising a presumption that it is so, and the doctrine is reasonable, though it may sometimes operate with severity. But once transgress the limits which that statement of the rule imposes, — once admit that a purchaser is to be affected with constructive notice of the contents of instruments not necessary to, nor presumptively connected with the title, only because by possibility they *may* affect it (for that may be predicated of almost any instrument); and it is impossible in sound reasoning, to stop short of the conclusion that every purchaser is affected with constructive notice of the contents of every instrument, of the mere existence of which he has notice, — a purchaser must be presumed to investigate the title of the property he purchases, and may, therefore, be presumed to have examined every instrument forming a link, directly or by inference, in that title; and that presumption I take to be the foundation of the whole doctrine. But it is impossible to presume that a purchaser examines instruments not directly nor presumptively connected with the title, because they *may* by possibility affect it." See *Jackson v. Rowe*, 2 Sim. & Stu. 472; *Hodgson v. Dean*, 2 Sim. & Stu. 221; *Hewitt v. Loosemore*, 9 Eng. Law & Eq. 35; and see also *Jones v. Smith* (per Lord Chancellor on Appeal), 1 Phill. 244.

² See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 4, and notes (*m*) and (*n*); *Evans v. Bicknell*, 6 Ves. 172, 182, 190, 191, 192; *Ibbotson v. Rhodes*, 2 Vern. 554; *Plumb v. Fluitt*, 2 Anst. 432; *Hewitt v. Loosemore*, 9 Eng. Law & Eq. 35; *Barnett v. Weston*, 12 Ves. 133; *Berry v. Mutual Ins. Co.*, 2 Johns. Ch. 603, 608; *Tourle v. Rand*, 2 Bro. Ch. 650, and Mr. Belt's note; *Peter v. Russell*, 2 Vern. 726, and Mr. Raithby's note (1).

which show a like concurrence and co-operation in some deceit upon the second mortgagee.¹

§ 394. It is curious to trace how nearly the Roman law approaches that of England on this subject; thus demonstrating that if they had not a common origin, at least each is derived from that strong sense of justice which must pervade all enlightened communities. It is an acknowledged principle of the Roman jurisprudence, that a creditor who consents to the sale, donation, or other alienation of the property of his debtor, which is pledged or mortgaged for his debt, cannot assert his title against the purchaser, unless he reserves it; for his loss of title cannot, under such circumstances, be asserted to be to his prejudice; since it is by his consent; and otherwise the purchaser would be deceived into the bargain. "Creditor, qui permittit rem venire, pignus dimittit."² Si consensit venditioni creditor, liberatur hypotheca.³ Si in venditione pignoris consenserit creditor, vel ut debitor hanc rem permutet, vel donet, vel in dotem det; dicendum erit, pignus liberari, nisi salvâ causâ pignoris sui consensit, vel venditioni, vel cæteris."⁴ But as to what shall be deemed a consent, the Roman law is very guarded. For it is there said, that we are not to take for a consent of the creditor to an alienation of the pledge, the knowledge which he may have of it; nor the silence which he may keep after he knows it; as, if he knows, that his debtor is about selling a house, which is mortgaged to him, and he says nothing about it. But, in order to deprive him of his right, it is necessary that it should appear by some act that he knows what is doing to his prejudice, and consents to it; or, that there is some ground to charge him with dishonesty for not having declared his right when he was under an obligation to do it, by which the purchaser was misled. Thus, if upon the alienation, the debtor declares that the property is not encumbered, and the creditor knowingly signs the contract, as a party or witness, thereby rendering himself an accomplice in the false affirmation, he will be bound by the alienation. But the mere signature of the creditor, as a witness to a contract of alienation, will not of itself bind

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 4, note (n); Peter v. Russell, 2 Vern. 726, and Mr. Raithby's note (1); 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 256, 257.

² Dig. Lib. 50, tit. 17, l. 158.

³ Dig. Lib. 20, tit. 6, l. 7; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 20, tit. 6, art. 2, n. 21.

⁴ Dig. Lib. 20, l. 4, § 1.

him, unless there are circumstances to show that he knew the contents, and acted disingenuously and dishonestly by the purchaser.¹ “Non videtur consensisse creditor, si, sciente eo, debitor rem vendiderit, cum ideo passus est venire, quod sciebat, ubique pignus sibi durare. Sed si subscripserit forte in tabulis emptionis consensisse videtur, nisi manifeste appareat deceptum esse.”²

§ 395. Another class of constructive frauds consists of those where a person purchases with full notice of the legal or equitable title of other persons to the same property. In such cases he will not be permitted to protect himself against such claims; but his own title will be postponed, and made subservient to theirs.³ It would be gross injustice to allow him to defeat the just rights of others by his own iniquitous bargain. He becomes, by such conduct, *particeps criminis* with the fraudulent grantor; and the rule of equity, as well as of law, is, “*Dolus et fraus nemini patrocinari debent.*”⁴ And in all such cases of purchases with notice, courts of equity will hold the purchaser a trustee for the benefit of the persons whose rights he has thus sought to defraud or defeat.⁵ Thus, if title-deeds should be deposited as a security for money (which would operate as an equitable mortgage), and a creditor, knowing the facts, should subsequently take a mortgage of the same property; he would be postponed to the equitable mortgage of the prior creditor; and the notice would raise a trust in him to the amount of such equitable mortgage.⁶ So, if a mortgagee, with notice of a trust, should get a conveyance from the trustee,

¹ Domat, B. 3, tit. 1, § 7, art. 15, and Strahan's note.

² Dig. Lib. 20, tit. 6, l. 8, § 15; Pothier Pand. Lib. 20, tit. 6, art. 2, n. 26, 27.

³ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 O. 1; Sugden on Vendors, ch. 16, § 5, 10; ch. 17, § 1, 2. An admitted exception (which is more fully adverted to in a subsequent note) is the case of a dowress. A person, purchasing with a notice of her title, may yet, by getting in a prior legal title or term, protect himself against her title. This is an anomaly, but it is now so firmly established that it cannot be shaken. See *Swannock v. Lefford*, Ambler, 6, and Mr. Blunt's note, and the note of Lord Hardwicke's judgment in *Co. Litt. 208 a. Radnor v. Vanderberdy*, Show. Parl. Cas. 69; *Maundrell v. Maundrell*, 10 Ves. 271, 272; *Wynn v. Williams*, 5 Ves. 130; *Male v. Smith*, Jacob, 497; *ante*, § 57, a; *post*, § 410, note.

⁴ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 3; 3 Co. 78.

⁵ *Ibid.*; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2; *Murray v. Ballou*, 1 Johns. Ch. 566; *Murray v. Finster*, 2 Johns. Ch. 158; *Maundrell v. Maundrell*, 10 Ves. 260, 261, 270.

⁶ *Birch v. Ellames*, 2 Anst. 427; *Plumb v. Fluitt*, 2 Anst. 433.

in order to protect his mortgage, he would not be allowed to derive any benefit from it; but he would be held to be subject to the original trust, in the same manner as the trustee. For it has been significantly said, that, although a purchaser may buy an encumbrance, or lay hold on any plank to protect himself, yet he shall not protect himself by the taking of a conveyance from a trustee, with notice of the trust; for he hereby becomes a trustee; and he must not, to get a plank to save himself, be guilty of a breach of trust.¹

§ 396. The same principle applies to cases of a contract to sell lands, or to grant leases thereof. If a subsequent purchaser has notice of the contract, he is liable to the same equity, and stands in the same place, and is bound to do the same acts, which the person who contracted, and whom he represents, would be bound to do.²

§ 397. It is upon the same ground, that, in countries where the registration of conveyances is required, in order to make them perfect titles against subsequent purchasers, if a subsequent purchaser has notice, at the time of his purchase, of any prior unregistered conveyance, he shall not be permitted to avail himself of his title against that prior conveyance.³ This has been long the settled doctrine in courts of equity; and it is often applied in America, although not in England, in courts of law, as a just exposition of the registry acts.⁴ The object of all acts of this

¹ *Saunders v. Dehew*, 2 Vern. 271; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2; *post*, § 413, 414, 421. See also *Foster v. Blackstone*, 1 Mylne & Keen, 297; *Timson v. Ramsbottom*, 2 Keen, 35.

² *Taylor v. Stibbert*, 2 Ves. Jr. 438; *Davis v. Earl of Strathmore*, 16 Ves. 419, 428, 429; *Underwood v. Courtown*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 64; *Mackreth v. Symmons*, 15 Ves. 350; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 1*, ch. 2, § 2, p. 192, &c.; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 C. 1.

³ *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 16, § 5, 10; ch. 17, § 1, 2; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (h); 1 *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 260; *Bushell v. Bushell*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 99 to 10; *Eyre v. Dolphin*, 2 B. & Beatt. 302; *Blades v. Blades*, 1 Eq. Abridg. 358; *Worseley v. De Mattos*, 1 Burr. 474, 475; *Forbes v. Dennister*, 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. 425; *Sheldon v. Coxe*, 2 Eden, 224; *Le Neve v. Le Neve*, 3 Atk. 646; s. c. 1 Ves. 64; *Amb.* 436; 2 *White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas.* 21, and notes; *Drew v. Lord Norbury*, 9 Irish Eq. 171; *Chandos v. Brownlow*, 2 Ridg. Parl. 428; *Bean v. Smith*, 2 Mason, 285; *Coppin v. Fernyhough*, 2 Bro. Ch. 291; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 16.

⁴ *Doe d. Robinson v. Alsop*, 5 B. & Ald. 142; *Norcross v. Widgery*, 2 Mass. 506; *Bigelow's Dig. Conveyance*, P. and note; *Jackson v. Sharp*, 9 Johns. 163; *Jackson v. Burgott*, 10 Johns. 457; *Jackson v. West*, 10 Johns. 466; *Johnson's*

sort is, to secure subsequent purchasers and mortgagees against prior secret conveyances and encumbrances. But where such purchasers and mortgagees have notice of any prior conveyance, it is impossible to hold that it is a secret conveyance, by which they are prejudiced. On the other hand, the neglect to register a prior conveyance is often a matter of mistake, or of overweening confidence in the grantor; and it would be a manifest fraud, to allow him to avail himself of the power, by any connivance with others, to defeat such prior conveyance.¹ The ground of the doctrine is (as Lord Hardwicke has remarked) plainly this: "That the taking of a legal estate, after notice of a prior right, makes a person a *malâ fide* purchaser; and not that he is not a purchaser for a valuable consideration in every other respect. This is a species of fraud and *dolus malus* itself; for he knew the first purchaser had the clear right of the estate; and, after knowing that, he takes away the right of another person, by getting the legal title."² And this exactly agrees with the definition of the civil law of *dolus malus*.³ "Now, if a person does not stop his hand, but gets the legal estate, when he knows the equity was in another, *machinatur ad circumveniendum*."⁴

§ 398. This doctrine, as to postponing registered to unregistered conveyances upon the ground of notice, has broken in upon the policy of the registration acts in no small degree; for a registered conveyance stands upon a different footing from an ordinary conveyance. It has, indeed, been greatly doubted, whether courts ought ever to have suffered the question of notice to be agitated as against a party who has duly registered his conveyance. But they have said that fraud shall not be permitted to prevail. There is however this qualification upon the doctrine, that it shall be available only in cases where the notice is so clearly proved as to make it fraudulent in the purchaser to take and register a conveyance, in prejudice to the known title of the other party.⁵

Dig. *Deed*, VIII.; Farnsworth *v.* Childs, 4 Mass. 637. See, as to the registry acts, 4 Kent, Comm. Lect. 58, p. 168 to 194 (4th edit.).

¹ *Le Neve v. Le Neve*, 3 Atk. 646; 1 Ves. 64; *Ambler*, 496, and *Blunt's note*, *ibid.*; *Belt's Suppl.* 50; *Bushell v. Bushell*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 98, 99, 100, 101, 102; *Eyre v. Dolphin*, 2 Ball & Beatt. 299, 300, 302; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 260, 261; *Toulmin v. Steere*, 3 Meriv. 209, 224.

² *Le Neve v. Le Neve*, 3 Atk. 646, and cases before cited.

³ Dig. Lib. 4, tit. 3, l. 2; *id.* Lib. 2, tit. 14, § 9.

⁴ Dig. Lib. 4, tit. 3, l. 2; *id.* Lib. 3, tit. 14, § 9.

⁵ *Wyatt v. Barwell*, 19 Ves. 439; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 16, § 5, 10. There

§ 399. What shall constitute notice, in cases of subsequent purchasers, is a point of some nicety, and resolves itself, sometimes into matter of fact, and sometimes into matter of law.¹ Notice may be either actual and positive, or it may be implied and constructive.² Actual notice requires no definition; for in that case knowledge of the fact is brought directly home to the party. Constructive notice is in its nature no more than evidence of notice, the presumption of which is so violent, that the court will not even allow of its being controverted.³ [Or, as has been

are some cases in which notice does not affect a purchaser. Thus, where an estate is limited to such uses as A. shall appoint; and a judgment is obtained against him, and he then appoints the estate to B., who has notice of the judgment; B. will, notwithstanding the notice, take the estate free from the lien of the judgment; for he takes under the deed of appointment, and of course by a title prior to the judgment. *Skeeles v. Shearly*, 8 Sim. 156, 157; s. c. 3 Mylne & Craig, 112. See, as to the effect of this notice, by an assignee of an equitable interest, to the legal holder of the property, to give priority of right over prior assignees, who have given no notice, *Timson v. Ramsbottom*, 2 Keen, 35; *Foster v. Blackstone*, 1 Mylne & Keen, 297; *post*, § 421 a, 1035 a.

¹ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 C. 2. See *Dey v. Dunham*, 2 Johns. Ch. 190; *Jones v. Smith*, 1 Hare, 43; *post*, § 1035, 1047, 1057.

² Sugden on Vendors, ch. 17, § 1, 2. In a treatise like the present, it is impracticable to do more than to glance at topics of this nature. The learned reader will find full information on the subject in treatises which profess to examine it at large. See Sugden on Vendors, ch. 16 and 17 (9th edit.); Newland on Contracts, ch. 36, p. 504 to 516.

³ *Plumb v. Fluit*, 2 Anst. 438, per Eyre, C. B.; *Kennedy v. Green*, 3 M. & K. 719; *Wilde v. Gibson*, 1 House of Lords Cases, 605; 4 Kent, Comm. Lect. 58, p. 179, 180 (4th edit.). See also *Jones v. Smith*, 1 Hare, 43; *Meux v. Bell*, 1 Hare, 73; *West v. Reid*, 2 Hare, 257. In *Jones v. Smith*, 1 Hare, 43, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Wigram examined the cases as to constructive notice very largely, and upon that occasion said: "It is, indeed, scarcely possible to declare, *à priori*, what shall be deemed constructive notice, because, unquestionably, that which would not affect one man may be abundantly sufficient to affect another. But I believe I may, with sufficient accuracy for my present purpose, and without danger, assert, that the cases in which constructive notice has been established, resolve themselves into two classes: first, cases in which the party charged has had actual notice, that the property in dispute was, in fact, charged, encumbered, or in some way affected, and the court has thereupon bound him with constructive notice of facts and instruments, to a knowledge of which he would have been led by an inquiry after the charge, encumbrance, or other circumstance affecting the property of which he had actual notice; and, secondly, cases in which the court has been satisfied from the evidence before it, that the party charged had designedly abstained from inquiry for the very purpose of avoiding notice. How reluctantly the court has applied, and within what strict limits it

elsewhere defined, constructive notice is knowledge imputed by the court on presumption, too strong to be rebutted, that the knowledge must have been communicated.¹

§ 400. An illustration of this doctrine of constructive notice is where the party has possession or knowledge of a deed, under which he claims his title, and it recites another deed, which shows a title in some other person, there the court will presume him to have notice of the contents of the latter deed, and will not permit him to introduce evidence to disprove it.² And, generally, it may be stated, as a rule on this subject, that where a purchaser cannot make out a title, but by a deed which leads him to another fact, he shall be presumed to have knowledge of that fact.³ So,

has confined the latter class of cases, I shall presently consider. The proposition of law, upon which the former class of cases proceeds, is not, that the party charged had notice of a fact or instrument, which, in truth, related to the subject in dispute without his knowing that such was the case, but that he had actual notice that it did so relate. The proposition of law, upon which this second class proceeds, is not that the party charged had incautiously neglected to make inquiries, but that he had designedly abstained from such inquiries for the purpose of avoiding knowledge, — a purpose which, if proved, would clearly show that he had a suspicion of the truth, and a fraudulent determination not to learn it. If, in short, there is not actual notice, that the property is in some way affected, and no fraudulent turning away from a knowledge of the facts, which the *res gestæ* would suggest to a prudent mind; if mere want of caution, as distinguished from fraudulent and wilful blindness, is all that can be imputed to the purchaser, — then the doctrine of constructive notice will not apply; there the purchaser will in equity be considered, as in fact he is, a *bonâ fide* purchaser without notice. This is clearly Sir Edward Sugden's opinion (*Vend. & Purch.* Vol. 3, p. 471, 472, ed. 10); and with that sanction I have no hesitation in saying it is mine also." Affirmed on appeal, 1 Phillips, 244. See also *Gibson v. Ingo*, 6 Hare, 112; *Farrow v. Rees*, 4 Beav. 18; *Taylor v. Baker*, 5 Price, 306; *Penny v. Watts*, 1 Mac. & G. 150. [* See this subject extensively discussed by Vice-Chancellor Stuart, in *Ogilvie v. Jeaffreson*, 6 Jur. N. S. 970, where it is held that one has constructive notice of such facts as he might have ascertained, but for his own want of care and prudence.]

¹ *Hewitt v. Loosemere* [* 9 Hare, 449; s. c.], 9 Eng. Law & Eq. 35; *Rogers v. Jones*, 8 New Hamp. 264; *Griffith v. Griffith*, 1 Hoff. Ch. 153.

² *Ibid.*; *Cuyler v. Brandt*, 2 Caines, Cas. in Err. 326; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 3, note (*m*); *Eyre v. Dolphin*, 2 B. & Beatt. 301, 302.

³ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 3, § 1, note (*b*); *Mertins v. Jolliffe, Ambler*, 311, 314; *Marr v. Bennett*, 2 Ch. Cas. 246; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 16; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 3, and note (*m*); *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 C. 2. This doctrine, however, is to be received with some qualifications. For if a man purchases an estate under a deed, which happens to relate also to other lands not comprised in that purchase, and afterwards he purchases the other lands, to

the purchaser is, in like manner, supposed to have knowledge of the instrument under which the party with whom he contracts, as executor, or trustee, or appointee, derives his power.¹ Indeed, the doctrine is still broader; for, whatever is sufficient to put a party upon inquiry (that is, whatever has a reasonable certainty as to time, place, circumstances, and persons), is, in equity, held to be good notice to bind him.² Thus, notice of a lease will be notice of its contents.³ So, if a person should purchase an estate from the owner, knowing it to be in the possession of tenants, he is bound to inquire into the estate⁴ which these tenants have, and, therefore, he is affected with notice of all the facts as to their estates.⁵

which an apparent title is made, independent of that deed, the former notice of the deed will not itself affect him in the second transaction; for he was not bound to carry in his recollection those parts of a deed which had no relation to the particular purchase he was then about to make, nor to take notice of more of the deed than affected his then purchase. *Hamilton v. Royse*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 327. In short, he is bound to take notice of those things only in the deed, which affect his present purchase, not any future purchase. *Mertins v. Jolliffe*, *Ambler*, 311.

¹ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 3, note (m); id. B. 3, ch. 3, § 1, note (b); *Mead v. Lord Orrery*, 3 Atk. 238; *Drapers' Company v. Yardly*, 2 Vern. 662; *Dunch v. Kent*, 1 Vern. 319; *Jackson v. Neely*, 10 Johns. 374; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 17, § 2.

² 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 3, and note (m); B. 3, ch. 3, § 1, and note (b); *Smith v. Low*, 1 Atk. 490; *Ferrars v. Cherry*, 2 Vern. 384; *Daniels v. Davison*, 16 Ves. 250; *Howarth v. Deem*, 1 Eden, 351, and Mr. Eden's note, ib.; *Serry v. Arden*, 1 Johns. Ch. 267; *Surman v. Barlow*, 2 Eden, 167; *Parker v. Brooke*, 9 Ves. 583; *Green v. Slayter*, 4 Johns. Ch. 38; *Eyre v. Dolphin*, 2 B. & Beatt. 301, 302; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 C. 2.

³ *Hall v. Smith*, 14 Ves. 426.

⁴ [See *Baynard v. Norris*, 3 Gill, 468; *Dahl v. Page*, 2 Green, Ch. 143.]

⁵ *Taylor v. Stibbert*, 2 Ves. Jr. 440; *Spinner v. Walsh*, 10 Irish, Eq. 380; *Daniels v. Davison*, 16 Ves. 249, 252; *Smith v. Low*, 1 Atk. 489; *Allen v. Anthony*, 1 Meriv. 282; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 3, and note (m); *Meux v. Maltby*, 2 Swanst. 281; *Chesterman v. Gardner*, 5 Johns. Ch. 29; *Hanbury v. Litchfield*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 629, 632, 633. In this last case, the Master of the Rolls (Sir C. C. Pepys) said: "It is true, that where a tenant is in possession of the premises, a purchaser has implied notice of the nature of his title. But, if, at the time of his purchase, the tenant in possession is not the original lessee, but merely holds under a derivative lease, and has no knowledge of the covenant contained in the original lease, it has never been construed want of due diligence in the purchaser, which is to fix him with implied notice, if he does not pursue his inquiries through every derivative lessee, until he arrives at the person entitled to the original lease, which can alone convey to him information of the

[* § 400 *a*. So where, upon an agreement to sell part of a vendor's land, the vendor and purchaser entered into mutual covenants, prohibiting building, except in a specified manner, on the sold and unsold parts, it was held that a subsequent owner of the unsold part, claiming through the grantor by means of deeds, one of which referred to the deed containing the prohibitory clause, but not to the clause, was bound by the prohibition, in equity;¹ and that a clause in the contract giving liquidated damages, on the failure of the grantor to perform covenants on his part, did not preclude the interference of a court of equity by interlocutory injunction.

§ 400 *b*. As to the time at which one must receive notice to affect him in equity, it is in general sufficient if it be received before he has parted with his money, or placed himself in a position where he cannot resist the payment, as would be the case where the rights of third parties had attached.² And it is not indispensable to the validity of notice of an equitable interest, that it should come from the party, or his agent. It is sufficient if it be derived *aliunde*; provided it be of a character likely to gain credence.³ In regard to the inquiry required of a party, it should be such as a prudent and careful man would exercise in his own business of equal importance.⁴ Accordingly, where the mortgagee is informed that there are charges affecting the estate, and is cognizant of two only, he cannot claim to be a purchaser without notice of other charges, because he believes that the two, which satisfy the word charges, are all the charges upon it. He is bound to inquire whether there are any others. The rule with respect to the consequences of a purchaser abstaining from making inquiries does not depend exclusively upon a fraudulent motive; a man may abstain from mere heedlessness, or stupidity, and be none the less responsible for the consequences; but if he

covenant." See also *Flagg v. Mann*, 2 Sumner, 486, 554, 555; *Blaisdell v. Stevens*, 16 Vt. 179; 17 *id.* 329; *Westervelt v. Huff*, 2 Sandf. 98; *Hood v. Fahnestock*, 1 Barr, 470.

¹ [* *Coles v. Sims*, 5 De G., M. & G. 1.

² *Collinson v. Lister*, 20 Beavan, 356; s. c. on Appeals, 7 De G., M. & G. 634.

³ *Rawbone's Bequest*, 3 Kay & J. 300; *Smith v. Smith*, 2 Cr. & M. 231.

⁴ *Briggs v. Taylor*, 28 Vt. 180. The rule of diligence is here discussed, and the English and American cases cited, more at length than we could here repeat, without occupying too much space.

make reasonable inquiry, and is deterred by a false answer, he is excusable, if it be of a character to delude a prudent man. But if he make no inquiry, he is not to be excused upon the ground that a false answer, or one leading to no result, would have been given if he had inquired. This cannot be known.¹

§ 400 c. In a somewhat recent case,² where one purchased shares in a joint-stock company, upon the representations of a prospectus different from the articles of association, and after he had knowledge of the articles, endeavored unsuccessfully to sell his shares, it was held that he could not thereafter repudiate the shares on the ground of fraud; for the reason that it was his duty to repudiate them at once upon the discovery of fraud, if he claimed to do it at all. And Lord Romilly here intimates an opinion, that in as much as the prospectus made express reference to the articles the purchaser was affected with notice of their contents. But in a later case,³ where the purchaser of shares was induced to make the purchase by representations in the prospectus which the promoters had no reason to believe true and which turned out to be untrue, although the articles were referred to in the prospectus, Vice Chancellor Wood held that the purchaser was not bound to go "upon an errand of inquiry whether the statements were correct or not." "He was entitled to rely upon the representations made to him as being true to the knowledge of the directors," and to believe that the promoters had made proper inquiry to learn the truth.]

§ 400 d. But, in a great variety of cases, it must necessarily be matter of no inconsiderable doubt and difficulty to decide what circumstances are sufficient to put a party upon inquiry. Vague and indeterminate rumor or suspicion is quite too loose and inconvenient in practice to be admitted to be sufficient.⁴ But

¹ Jones v. Williams, 24 Beavan, 47; Ware v. Lord Egmont, 4 De G., M. & G. 460. In Jones v. Williams, the Master of the Rolls says of the case of Kennedy v. Green, 3 My. & Keen, 699: "It is always the first case cited in all causes depending on questions of motive; but, in truth, it rarely has any application to any one of them." This is indeed a sharp comment, but too pertinent to be lightly regarded.

² Briggs *ex parte*, 12 Jur. n. s. 322; s. c. Law Rep. 1 Eq. 483, 14 Law T. n. s. 39.

³ Smith v. The Reese River Mining Co., 12 Jur. n. s. 616; s. c. Law Rep. 2 Eq. 264, 14 W. R. 606.]

⁴ Sugden on Vendors, ch. 17; Wildgrove v. Wayland, Godb. 147; Jolland v. Stainbridge, 3 Ves. 478.

there will be found almost infinite gradations of presumption between such rumor, or suspicion, and that certainty as to facts, which no mind could hesitate to pronounce enough to call for further inquiry, and to put the party upon his diligence. No general rule can, therefore, be laid down to govern such cases. Each must depend upon its own circumstances.¹ There is no case which goes the length of saying, that a failure of the utmost circumspection shall have the same effect of postponing a party, as if he were guilty of fraud or wilful neglect, or had positive notice.² And, although a mistake of law, upon the construction of a deed or contract, will not alone discharge a purchaser from the legal effects of notice of such deed or contract; yet there may be a case of such doubtful equity under the circumstances, that it ought not to be enforced against such a purchaser.³ The mere fact, that the assignees of an insolvent debtor have made a sale of the estate at auction, under circumstances of negligence on their part, will not affect the purchaser with notice, as such circumstances are collateral to the question of title. Even if before he takes the conveyance, he have notice of such circumstances, yet if he have purchased *bonâ fide*, his title is not necessarily voidable. But the question must depend in a great measure upon this, whether the conduct of the assignee be such a gross and palpable breach of duty as ought justly to avoid the sale.⁴

§ 401. How far the registration of a conveyance, in countries where such registration is authorized and required by law, shall operate as constructive notice to subsequent purchasers, by mere presumption of law, independent of any actual notice, has been much discussed both in England and in America. It is not doubted in either country that a prior conveyance, duly registered, operates to give full effect to the legal and equitable estate conveyed thereby, against subsequent conveyances of the same legal

¹ See 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 3, § 1, note (b); *Eyre v. Dolphin*, 2 B. & Beatt. 301; *Hine v. Dodd*, 2 Atk. 275. See *Jones v. Smith*, *The English Jurist*, May 27th, 1845, p. 431; *Flagg v. Mann*, 2 Sumner, 489, 549, 560.

² *Plumb v. Fluit*, 2 Anst. 433, 440. See *Dey v. Dunham*, 2 Johns. Ch. 190, 191; *Hewitt v. Loosemore*, 9 Eng. Law & Eq. 35; *Worthington v. Morgan*, 16 Sim. 547.

³ *Cordwill v. Mackrill*, 2 Eden, 344, 348; *Parker v. Brooke*, 9 Ves. 583, 588; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 3, and note; *Bovey v. Smith*, 1 Vern. 144, 149; *Walker v. Smallwood*, Amb. 676.

⁴ *Borell v. Dann*, 2 Hare, 450 to 455.

and equitable estate.¹ But the question becomes important as to other collateral effects, such as defeating the right of tacking of mortgages, and other incidentally accruing equities between the different purchasers. For, if the mere registry, in such cases, without actual knowledge of the conveyance, operates as constructive notice, it shuts out many of those equities which otherwise might have an obligatory priority.² It has been truly remarked, that there is a material difference between actual notice, and the operation of the registry acts. Actual notice may bind the conscience of the parties; the operation of the registry acts may bind their title, but not their conscience.³

§ 402. In England, the doctrine seems at length to be settled, that the mere registration of a conveyance shall not be deemed constructive notice to subsequent purchasers, but that actual notice must be brought home to the party, amounting to fraud.⁴ The subject certainly is attended with no inconsiderable difficulty. Some learned judges have expressed a doubt, whether courts of equity ought not to have said, that in all cases of a public registry, which is a known repository for conveyances, a subsequent purchaser ought to search, or be bound by notice of the registry, in the same way as he would be by a decree in equity, or by a judgment at law.⁵ Other learned judges have intimated a different opinion; assigning as a reason, that if the registration of the conveyance should be held constructive notice, it must be notice of all that is contained in the conveyance; and, then, subsequent purchasers would be bound to inquire after the contents, the inconveniences of which cannot but be deemed exceedingly great.⁶ The question seems first to have arisen in a case of the tacking of mortgages, about the year 1730; and it was then decided, by Lord Chancellor King, that the mere registration of a second mortgage did not prevent a prior mortgagor from tacking a third mortgage, when he

¹ *Wrightson v. Hudson*, 2 Eq. Abr. 609, Pl. 7.

² *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 36, p. 508.

³ *Underwood v. Courtown*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 66. See *Latouche v. Dunsany*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 137; *Dey v. Dunhan*, 2 Johns. Ch. 190, 191.

⁴ *Wyatt v. Barwell*, 19 Ves. 435; *Jolland v. Stainbridge*, 3 Ves. 477; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 C. 1.

⁵ *Morecock v. Dickens*, Amb. 480; *Hine v. Dodd*, 2 Atk. 275; *Parkist v. Alexander*, 1 Johns. Ch. 399; *Sugden on Vend.* ch. 16, 17.

⁶ *Latouche v. Dunsany*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 157; *Underwood v. Courtown*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 64, 66; *Pentland v. Stokes*, 2 B. & Beatt. 75.

had no actual notice of the existence of the second mortgage.¹ This decision has ever since been steadily adhered to, perhaps more from its having become a rule of property, than from a sense of its intrinsic propriety.

§ 403. In America, however, the doctrine has been differently settled; and it is uniformly held, that the registration of a conveyance operates as constructive notice to all subsequent purchasers of any estate, legal or equitable, in the same property.² The reasoning upon which this doctrine is founded, is the obvious policy of the registry acts, the duty of the party purchasing under such circumstances to search for prior encumbrances, the means of which search are within his power, and the danger (so forcibly alluded to by Lord Hardwicke) of letting in parol proof of notice, or want of notice, of the actual existence of the conveyance.³ The American doctrine certainly has the advantage of certainty and universality of application; and it imposes upon subsequent purchasers a reasonable degree of diligence only in examining their titles to estates.⁴

§ 404. But this doctrine, as to the registration of deeds, being constructive notice to all subsequent purchasers, is not to be understood of all deeds and conveyances which may be *de facto* registered, but of such only as are authorized and required by law to be registered, and are duly registered in compliance with law. If they are not authorized or required to be registered,⁵ or the registry itself is not in compliance with the law,⁶ the act of registration is treated as a mere nullity; and, then, the subsequent purchaser is affected only by such actual notice as would amount to a fraud.⁷

¹ Bedford v. Backhouse, 2 Eq. Abridg. 615, Pl. 12; s. p. Wrightson v. Hudson, 2 Eq. Abridg. 609, Pl. 7; Cator v. Cooly, 1 Cox, 182; Wiseman v. Westland, 1 Y. & Jerv. 117.

² Parkhurst v. Alexander, 1 Johns. Ch. 394; Schutt v. Large, 6 Barb. 373.

³ Hine v. Dodd, 2 Atk. 275.

⁴ Johnson v. Stagg, 2 Johns. 510; Frost v. Beekman, 1 Johns. Ch. 288, 299; s. c. 18 Johns. 544; Parkist v. Alexander, 1 Johns. Ch. 394. The better opinion also seems to be, that the registration of an equitable mortgage, or title, or incumbrance, is notice to a subsequent purchaser, as much as if it were a legal security or title. Parkist v. Alexander, 1 Johns. Ch. 398, 399, and the cases there cited.

⁵ Villard v. Roberts, 1 Strobb. Eq. 393; Lewis v. Baird, 3 McLean, 56.

⁶ Tillman v. Coward, 12 S. & M. 262.

⁷ Ibid.; Underwood v. Courtown, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 68; Latouche v. Dunsany,

§ 405. It is upon similar grounds, that every man is presumed to be attentive to what passes in the courts of justice of the state or sovereignty where he resides. And, therefore, a purchase made of property actually in litigation, *pendente lite*, for a valuable consideration, and without any express or implied notice in point of fact, affects the purchaser in the same manner as if he had such notice; and he will accordingly be bound by the judgment or decree in the suit.¹

§ 406. Ordinarily, it is true, that the decree of a court binds only the parties and their privies in representation or estate. But he who purchases during the pendency of a suit, is held bound by the decree that may be made against the person from whom he derives title. The litigating parties are exempted from taking any notice of the title so acquired; and such purchaser need not be made a party to the suit.² Where there is a real and fair purchase, without any notice, the rule may operate very hardly.³ But it is a rule founded upon a great public policy; for otherwise, alienations made during a suit might defeat its whole purpose, and there would be no end to litigation.⁴ And hence arises the maxim, *pendente lite, nihil innovetur*; the effect of which is not to annul the conveyance, but only to render it subservient to the rights of the parties in the litigation.⁵ As to the rights of these parties, the conveyance is treated as if it never had any existence; and it does not vary them.⁶ A *lis pendens*, however, being only a general notice

1 Sch. & Lefr. 157; *Astor v. Wells*, 4 Wheat. 466; *Frost v. Beckman*, 1 Johns. Ch. 300; *Lessee of Heister v. Fortner*, 2 Binn. 40; *Farmer's Loan & Trust Co. v. Maltby*, 8 Paige, 361.

¹ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 C. 3 and 4; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 3, note (n); *Sorrell v. Carpenter*, 2 P. Will. 482; *Worsley v. Earl of Scarborough*, 3 Atk. 392; *Bishop of Winchester v. Paine*, 11 Ves. 194; *Garth v. Ward*, 2 Atk. 175; *Mead v. Lord Orrery*, 3 Atk. 242; *Gaskeld v. Durdin*, 2 B. & Beatt. 169; *Moore v. Macnamara*, 2 B. & Beatt. 186; *Murray v. Ballou*, 1 Johns. Ch. 566. [See *Lewis v. Mew*, 1 Strobb, Eq. 180; *Price v. White*, 1 Bailey's Eq. 244, that the pleadings in the suit pending should direct a purchaser's attention to the identity of the property.]

² *Bishop of Winchester v. Paine*, 11 Ves. 197; *Metcalf v. Pulvertoft*, 2 V. & Beam. 205.

³ 2 P. Will. 483; *Story on Equity Plead.* § 156, 351; 2 *Story on Equity Jurisp.* § 908.

⁴ *Co. Litt.* 224 b; *Metcalf v. Pulvertoft*, 2 V. & Beam. 199; *Gaskeld v. Durdin*, 2 B. & Beatt. 169.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*; *Bishop of Winchester v. Paine*, 11 Ves. 197; *Murray v. Ballou*, 1

of an equity to all the world, it does not affect any particular person with a fraud, unless such person had also special notice of the title in dispute in the suit.¹ If, therefore, the right to relief in equity depends upon any supposed co-operation in a fraud, it is indispensable to establish an express or direct notice of the fraudulent act. And although, as we have seen, a registered deed will be postponed to a prior unregistered deed, where the second purchaser had actual notice of the first purchase; yet the doctrine has never been carried to the extent of making a *lis pendens* constructive notice of the prior unregistered deed; but actual notice is required.²

§ 407. In general, a decree is not constructive notice to any persons who are not parties or privies to it; and, therefore, other persons are not presumed to have notice of its contents. But a person who is not a party to a decree, if he has actual notice of it, will be bound by it; and if he pays money in opposition to it, he will be compelled to pay it again.³ And a purchaser, having notice of a judgment, will be bound by it, although he has not been docketed, so as to secure the priority of lien and satisfaction, attached to judgments.⁴

§ 408. To constitute constructive notice, it is not indispensable that it should be brought home to the party himself. It is sufficient, if it is brought home to the agent, attorney, or counsel of the party; for, in such cases, the law presumes notice in the principal, since it would be a breach of trust in the former not to communicate the knowledge to the latter.⁵ But, in all these cases, notice to bind the principal should be notice in the same transaction, or

Johns. Ch. 566; *Murray v. Finster*, 2 Johns. Ch. 155; *Griffith v. Griffith*, 1 Hoff. Ch. 153.

¹ *Mead v. Lord Orrery*, 3 Atk. 242, 243; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 3, note (n); id. B. 3, § 1, note (b).

² *Wyatt v. Barwell*, 19 Ves. 439; *Newman v. Chapman*, 2 Rand. 93.

³ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 3, note (n); *Harvey v. Montague*, 1 Vern. 57; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 17, § 1, 2.

⁴ *Davis v. Earl of Strathmore*, 16 Ves. 419. [* As to personal estate, the purchaser of a trustee, who had no power of sale, acquires only the title of the vendor. And where the trust is created under a will, the record of the will in the probate court is notice of the trust to every one. The law implies notice in such case. *Ellis v. Woods*, 9 Rich. Eq. 19.]

⁵ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 C. 5 and 6; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 4; *Sheldon v. Cox*, 2 Eden, 224, 228; *Jennings v. Moore*, 2 Vern. 609; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 17; *Astor v. Wells*, 4 Wheat. 466.

negotiation ; for, if the agent, attorney, or counsel was employed in the same thing by another person, or in another business or affair, and at another time, since which he may have forgotten the facts, it would be unjust to charge his present principal on account of such a defect of memory.¹ It was significantly observed by Lord Hardwicke, that, if this rule were not adhered to, it would make the titles of purchasers and mortgagees depend altogether upon the memory of their counsellors and agents ; and oblige them to apply to persons of less eminence as counsel, as being less likely to have notice of former transactions.²

¹ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 C. 5 and 6, and cases before cited ; Fitzgerald v. Falconberg, Fitzgibb. 211.

² Warrick v. Warrick, 3 Atk. 294 ; Worsley v. Earl of Scarborough, 3 Atk. 292 ; Lowther v. Carlton, 2 Atk. 242, 392. But notice to a solicitor in one transaction, which is closely followed by and connected with another, so as clearly to give rise to a presumption that the prior transaction was present in his mind, and that he could not have forgotten it, is constructive notice to his client. *A fortiori*, if it is clear that, at the time of the second transaction, the first was fully in his mind. Hargreaves v. Rothwell, 1 Keen, 154, 159. [* But see Wythes v. Labouchere, 3 De G. & J. 593. In Ogilvie v. Jeaffreson, 6 Jur. n. s. 970 (July 1860), the general question of notice to a solicitor, in a different transaction, being notice to his client, is a good deal discussed, and the cases reviewed ; and the conclusion arrived at, that the employment of the solicitor of the other party, and who, by consequence, has a direct motive not to disclose any fraud, or defect of title, which may have come to his knowledge in his former employment, is such a degree of negligence as will affect the client with knowledge of all the facts which might have been learned by a careful and watchful course. And a distinction is here taken in regard to the degree of watchfulness required of one about to advance his money, as a purchaser, and others, who are not placed in circumstances demanding any extraordinary circumspection ; and it is declared that where one remits the proper diligence required of his position, he is not entitled to the peculiar privileges of that position, for instance, that of a *bond fide* purchaser for value. The distinction of the text, between notice to an agent in the same, or a different transaction, is not here alluded to. It seems not now to be regarded by the English judges as of controlling force ; but that every case must depend upon the degree of care and watchfulness exercised by the principal upon the particular occasion, as well in the selection of his solicitor as in other respects. If he select one known to have a motive not to disclose the truth, he is affected with the actual knowledge of his solicitor, unless the solicitor was under some prior professional obligation not to disclose such facts. And the same rule applies where the solicitor knows of the facts, although such knowledge is acquired in a different transaction, and omits to disclose them, through negligence or indifference. This want of care in the agent makes the knowledge that of his client. But where the knowledge acquired by the agent, in the prior transaction, is so remote, in point of time, as not to be remembered, it will not affect the cli-

§ 408 *a*. Although the general rule, that notice to the agent is notice to the principal, is well established, yet there are some nice cases which may arise in the application of the rule. Thus, for example, suppose the case of a corporation acting by a board of directors, or trustees, or other officers or agents; the question may arise, whether notice to one of the board of facts unknown to all the others, will bind the corporation, or whether the notice should be offered to the board itself, or a majority of them. The authorities on this point do not seem entirely in harmony.¹

ent. And if the agent is bound not to disclose, and this is not known to the client; or if known, the knowledge is not of a character to excite suspicion, the client will not be regarded as wanting in proper care, in not employing another solicitor. So that the question of constructive notice to the principal through his solicitor, or agent, depends upon the circumstances of the particular case. *Hart, Leslie, & Warren v. Farmers' & Mechanics' Bank*, 32 Vt. It is said, in the case of *Browne v. Savage*, 5 Jur. N. S. 1020, that notice to one trustee of an encumbrance on the fund is sufficient, but inquiries, for encumbrances, should be made of all the trustees. But where the mortgagor being a solicitor acting for himself and the mortgagee, it was held this did not affect the mortgagee with notice of facts within the knowledge of the mortgagor. *Espin v. Pemberton*, 5 Jur. N. S. 55; s. C. 4 Drew. 333; s. C. 28 L. J. N. S. Ch. 308. The distinction between notice in the same and in a different transaction is not adverted to, although obviously arising in the case. But when this case came before the Lord Chancellor on appeal, 5 Jur. N. S. 157; s. C. 28 L. J. N. S. Ch. 311, his lordship does advert to this point, and lays down the precise English rule in regard to it. "If a person employs a solicitor, who either knows, or has it intimated to him in the course of his employment, a fact that is hostile to his interest, he is bound by it, whether the fact is communicated to, or is concealed from him. Constructive notice is properly the knowledge which the court imputes to a person." His lordship therefore prefers calling it actual knowledge, or imputed knowledge, because what is known to his agent is the same as if known to himself, and so also of what one might learn upon inquiry, which he fraudulently abstains from making, lest he might learn something unfavorable. But where one *bonâ fide* makes inquiry and receives such information as puts him at rest, he will be excused. It may therefore be assumed that, according to the English rule, what is in the recollection of an agent at the time he enters another employment, becomes notice to his principal, as much as if it were repeated during the second employment, or came first to his knowledge during such employment. This rule seems reasonable and tangible, and any thing short of this leads to constant embarrassment. And its effect does not depend either upon the fact of it being communicated to the principal or the probability that it would be. Where the agent is guilty of a positive fraud, as in *Kennedy v. Green*, 3 My. & K. 699, this rule may require qualification. See also *Hunt v. Elmes*, 7 Jur. N. S. 200.]

¹ See Story on Agency, § 140 *a*, 140 *b*; *Commercial Bank v. Cunningham*, 24 Pick. 278; *Porter v. Bank of Rutland*, 19 Verm. 410.

§ 409. The doctrine, which has been already stated, in regard to the effect of notice, is strictly applicable to every purchaser, whose title comes into his hands, affected with such notice. But it in no manner affects any such title, derived from another person, in whose hands it stood free from any such taint. Thus, a purchaser with notice may protect himself by purchasing the title of another *bonâ fide* purchaser for a valuable consideration without notice; for, otherwise, such *bonâ fide* purchaser would not enjoy the full benefit of his own unexceptionable title.¹ Indeed, he would be deprived of the marketable value of such a title; since it would be necessary to have public notoriety given to the existence of a prior encumbrance, and no buyer could be found, or none except at a depreciation equal to the value of the encumbrance. For a similar reason, if a person who has notice, sells to another who has no notice, and is a *bonâ fide* purchaser for a valuable consideration, the latter may protect his title, although it was affected with the equity arising from notice, in the hands of the person from whom he derived it; for, otherwise, no man would be safe in any purchase, but would be liable to have his own title defeated by secret equities, of which he could have no possible means of making a discovery.

§ 410. This doctrine, in both of its branches, has been settled for nearly a century and a half in England; and it arose in a case in which A. purchased an estate, with notice of an encumbrance, and then sold it to B., who had no notice; and B. afterwards sold it to C., who had notice; and the question was, whether the encumbrance bound the estate in the hands of C. The then Master of the Rolls thought, that although the equity of the encumbrance was gone, while the estate was in the hands of B., yet it was revived upon the sale to C. But the Lord Keeper reversed the decision, and held, that the estate in the hands of C. was discharged of the encumbrance, notwithstanding the notice of A. and C.² This doctrine has ever since been adhered to as an indispensable muniment of title.³ And it is wholly immaterial of what

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2, note (i); Mitf. Plead. by Jeremy (1827), p. 278 (4th edit.); Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 A. 10; 4 I. 3, 4, 11.

² Harrison v. Forth, Prec. Ch. 61; s. c. 1 Eq. Abridg. Notice, A. 6, p. 331.

³ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2, note (i); Brandlyn v. Ord, 1 West, 512; s. c. 1 Atk. 571; Lowther v. Carlton, 2 Atk. 242; Ferrars v. Cherry, 2 Vern. 383;

nature the equity is, whether it is a lien, or an encumbrance, or a trust, or any other claim; for a *bond fide* purchase of an estate, for a valuable consideration, purges away the equity from the estate, in the hands of all persons who may derive title under it, with the exception of the original party whose conscience stands bound by the violation of his trust and meditated fraud. But, if the estate becomes revested in him, the original equity will reattach to it in his hands.¹

Mertins v. Jolliffe, Ambl. 313; *Sweet v. Southcote*, 2 Bro. Ch. 66; *McQueen v. Farquhar*, 11 Ves. 477, 478; *Bracken v. Miller*, 4 Watts & Serg. 102.

¹ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2, note (i), and cases before cited; and *Kennedy v. Daly*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 379; *Bumpus v. Plattner*, 1 Johns. Ch. 219; *Jackson v. Henry*, 10 Johns. 185; *Jackson v. Given*, 8 Johns. 137; *Demarest v. Wyncoop*, 3 Johns. Ch. 147; *Alexander v. Pendleton*, 8 Cranch, 462; *Ingram v. Pelham*, Ambl. 153; *Fitzsimmons v. Ogden*, 7 Cranch, 218. The rule adopted in equity, in favor of *bond fide* purchasers without notice, not to grant any relief against them, is founded, as we have seen, upon a general principle of public policy. *Wallwyn v. Lee*, 9 Ves. 24. It is not, however, absolutely universal; for it has been broken in upon in two classes of cases. In the first place, it is not allowed in favor of a judgment creditor who has no notice of the plaintiff's equity. This appears to proceed upon the principle that such judgment creditor shall be deemed entitled merely to the same rights as the debtor had, as he comes in under him, and not through him; and upon no new consideration, like a purchaser. *Burgh v. Burgh*, Rep. Temp. Finch, 28. In the second place, it is not allowed in favor of a *bond fide* purchaser without notice, against the claims of a dowress, as such. *Williams v. Lambe*, 3 Brown, Ch. Rep. 264. This last exception is apparently anomalous, and has been established upon the distinction that the protection of a *bond fide* purchaser does not apply against a party plaintiff, seeking relief upon the ground of a legal title (such as Dower is), but only against a party plaintiff, seeking a relief upon an equitable title. The propriety of the distinction has been greatly questioned. It has been impugned by Lord Rosslyn, in *Jerrard v. Saunders* (2 Ves. Jr. 454). The cases of *Burlare v. Cook*, Freem. (2 R. 24), and *Parker v. Blythmore* (2 Eq. Abridg. 79, pl. 1), are against it. *Rogers v. Leele* (2 Freem. 84), and the above case of *Williams v. Lambe*, are in its favor. Mr. Sugden doubts the correctness of the distinction. *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 18, *sub finem* (9th edit.). On the other hand, Mr. Belt maintains its correctness. Belt's note (1) to 3 Brown, Ch. 264. So does Mr. Beames (*Beam. Eq. Pl.* 244, 245), and Mr. Roper, also, in his work on Husband and Wife, Vol. 1, 446, 447. Mr. Hovenden, in his note to 2 Freem. 24, acquiesces in it. See also *Medlicott v. O'Donel*, 1 B. & Beatt. 171. See also *Mitf. Eq. Plead.* by Jeremy, p. 274, note (d) (4th edit.). The same distinction was expressly affirmed in *Collins v. Archer*, 1 Russ. & Mylne, 292. There is a peculiarity in the case of a dowress which operates against her, and, upon this point of notice, is proper to be mentioned. Though notice of the title will protect every other interest in the inheritance, it will not protect hers.

[* 410 a. It will have been perceived that the term constructive notice is here used in a somewhat indefinite sense. The same is true in regard to most text-writers and judges. This form of expression is applied, indiscriminately, to such notice as is not susceptible of being explained or rebutted, and to that which may be. It seems more appropriate to the former kind of notices. It will then include notice by the registry, and notice by *lis pendens*. But such notice as depends upon possession, upon knowledge of an agent, upon facts to put one upon inquiry, and some other similar matters, although often called constructive notice, is rather implied notice, or presumptive notice, subject to be rebutted or explained. Constructive notice is thus a conclusive presumption, or a presumption of law, while implied notice is a mere presumption of fact. If this distinction were carefully preserved by writers upon this subject, it would enable us to escape a good deal of confusion in regard to the subject of notice.]

§ 411. Indeed, purchasers of this sort are so much favored in equity, that it may be stated to be a doctrine now generally established, that a *bonâ fide* purchaser for a valuable consideration, without notice of any defect in his title at the time of his purchase, may lawfully buy in any statute, mortgage, or other encumbrance upon the same estate for his protection. If he can defend himself by any of them at law, his adversary will have no help in equity to set these encumbrances aside; for equity will not disarm such a purchaser; but will act upon the wise policy of the common law, to protect and quiet lawful possessions, and strengthen such titles.¹ We shall have occasion, hereafter, in various cases, to see the application of this doctrine.

§ 412. And this naturally leads us to the consideration of the equitable doctrine of tacking, as it is technically called, that is, uniting securities, given at different times, so as to prevent any intermediate purchasers from claiming a title to redeem, or otherwise to discharge one lien, which is prior, without redeeming or discharging the other liens also, which are subsequent to his own

Maundrell v. Maundrell, 10 Ves. 271, 272; *Wynn v. Williams*, 5 Ves. 190; *Mole v. Smith*, Jacob, 497; *Swannock v. Lifford*, Ambl. 6; s. c. Co. Litt. 208 a; *Butler's note* (105); *Radner v. Vanderbendy*, Show. Parl. Cas. 69; *ante*, § 57 a; *post*, § 434, 436, 630, 631.

¹ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 3; Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 A. 10; 4 I. 3; 4 I. 11; 4 W. 29.

title.¹ Thus, if a third mortgagee, without notice of a second mortgage, should purchase in the first mortgage, by which he would acquire the legal title, the second mortgagee would not be permitted to redeem the first mortgage without redeeming the third mortgage also; for, in such a case, equity tacks both mortgages together in his favor. And, in such a case, it will make no difference that the third mortgagee, at the time of purchasing the first mortgage, had notice of the second mortgage; for he is still entitled to the same protection.²

§ 413. There is, certainly, great apparent hardship in this rule; for it seems most conformable to natural justice, that each mortgagee should, in such a case, be paid according to the order and priority of his encumbrances.³ The general reasoning, by which this doctrine is maintained, is this: *In æquali jure, melior est conditio possidentis*. Where the equity is equal, the law shall prevail; and he that hath only a title in equity shall not prevail against a title by law and equity in another.⁴ But, however correct this reasoning may be when rightly applied, its applicability to the case stated may reasonably be doubted. It is assuming the whole case, to say, that the right is equal, and the equity is equal. The second mortgagee has a prior right, and at least an equal equity; and then the rule seems justly to apply, that, where the equities are equal, that title which is prior in time shall prevail; *Qui prior est in tempore, potior est in jure*.⁵

¹ Jeremy on Equity Jurisd. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1, p. 188 to 191; [* Spencer v. Pearson, 24 Beavan, 266.]

² 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 2, and notes (b), (c); Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 A. 10; Marsh v. Lee, 2 Vent. 337, 338; s. c. 1 Ch. Cas. 162; Maundrell v. Maundrell, 10 Ves. 260, 270; Morett v. Paske, 2 Atk. 53, 54; Matthews v. Cartwright, 2 Atk. 347; Robinson v. Davison, 1 Bro. Ch. 63; Newland on Contracts, ch. 36, p. 515; Sugden on Vendors, ch. 16, 17; Powell on Mortgages, Vol. 2, p. 554, Mr. Coventry's note (A).

³ Brace v. Duchess of Marlborough, 2 P. Will. 492; Lowthian v. Hasel, 3 Bro. Ch. 163.

⁴ Jeremy on Equity Jurisd. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1, p. 188 to 192 (4th edit.); 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. § 1, and notes.

⁵ Mr. Chancellor Kent, in his learned Commentaries, has expressed a strong disapprobation of the doctrine of tacking. "There is," says he, "no natural equity in tacking, and when it supersedes a prior encumbrance, it works manifest injustice. By acquiring a still more antecedent encumbrance, the junior party acquires, by substitution, the rights of the first encumbrancer over the purchased security, and he justly acquires nothing more. The doctrine of tacking is found-

§ 414. It has been significantly said, that it is a plank, gained by the third mortgagee, in a shipwreck, *tabula in naufragio*.¹ But, independently of the inapplicability of the figure, which can justly apply only to cases of extreme hazard to life, and not to mere seizures of property, it is obvious, that no man can have a right, in consequence of a shipwreck, to convert another man's property to his own use, or to acquire an exclusive right against a prior owner. The best apology for the actual enforcement of the rule is, that it has been long established, and that it ought not now to be departed from, since it has become a rule of property.

§ 415. Lord Hardwicke has given the following account of the origin and foundation of the doctrine. "As to the equity of this court, that a third encumbrancer, having taken his security or mortgage without notice of the second encumbrance, and then, being puisne, taking in the first encumbrance, shall squeeze out and have satisfaction before the second; that equity is certainly established in general; and was so in *Marsh v. Lee*, by a very solemn determination by Lord Hale, who gave it the term of the creditor's *tabula in naufragio*. This is the leading case. Perhaps it might be going a good way at first; but it has been followed ever since; and, I believe, was rightly settled only on this foundation by the particular constitution of the law of this country. It could not happen in any other country but this; because the jurisdiction of law and equity is administered here in different courts, and creates different kind of rights in estates. And, therefore, as courts of equity break in upon the common law, where necessity and conscience require it, still, they allow superior force and strength to a legal title to estates; and, therefore, where there is a legal title and equity on one side, this court never thought fit, that, by reason of a prior equity against a man, who had a legal title, that man should be hurt; and this, by reason of that force, this court necessarily and rightly allows to the common law and to legal titles. But if this had happened in any other country, it

ed on the assumption of a principle which is not true in point of fact; for, as between A., whose deed is honestly acquired and recorded to-day, and B., whose deed is with equal honesty acquired and recorded to-morrow, the equities upon the estate are not equal. He who has been fairly prior in point of time, has the better equity, for he is prior in point of right. 4 Kent, Comm. Lect. 58, p. 178, 179 (4th edit.).

¹ *Marsh v. Lee*, 2 Vent. 337; *Wortley v. Birkhead*, 2 Ves. 574; *Brace v. Duchess of Marlborough*, 2 P. Will. 491. See *post*, § 421 a.

could never have made a question; for, if the law and equity are administered by the same jurisdiction, the rule, *Qui prior est in tempore, potior est in jure*, must hold.¹

¹ *Wortley v. Birkhead*, 2 Ves. 573. The same quotation is in 2 Fonbl. Eq. 304, B. 3, ch. 2, § 2, in n. (e). Mr. Coventry, in his valuable notes to Powell on Mortgages (Vol. 2, p. 454, note), supposes that the English law on this subject is sanctioned by the civil law. In this view of the matter he is entirely mistaken. The civil law admits no such principle as tacking; the general rule is: *Qui prior est in tempore, potior est in jure*. There are two acknowledged exceptions: one where the first encumbrancer consents to the second pledge, so as to give a priority; another is, where the second pledge is for money to preserve the property. The doctrine of the civil law, referred to by Mr. Coventry, simply gives to a third mortgagee, paying off a first mortgage, the same priority, by way of substitution, which the first mortgagee had. It does not change the rights of the third mortgagee, as to his own mortgage. So the doctrine is stated in the Pandects (incorrectly referred to by Mr. Coventry), and so is the doctrine of Domat, in the passage cited. See Dig. Lib. 20, tit. 4, l. 16; 1 Domat, B. 3, tit. 1, § 3, art. 7, and id. § 6, art. 6, 7; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 20, tit. 4, § 1, n. 1 to 32, and especially n. 10, 11, Cod. Lib. 8, tit. 18, l. 1, 5. The language of the civil law, in the principal passage cited, is: *Plane, cum tertius creditor primum de sua pecunia dimisit, in locum ejus substituitur in ea quantitate, quam superiori exsolvit. Dig. Lib. 20, tit. 4, l. 16. In Fonblanque's Equity (2 Fonbl. B. 3, ch. 1, § 9, p. 272), it is said in the text: "By the civil law the mortgage is properly a security only for the debt itself, for which it was given, and the consequences of it, as the principal sum and interest, and the costs and damages laid out in preserving it." The passage, on which reliance is had for this purpose, is the Dig. Lib. 13, tit. 7, l. 8, § 5. *Cum pignus ex pactione venire potest, non solum ob sortem non solutam venire poterit, sed ob cætera quoque, veluti usuras, et quæ in id impensa sunt. Mr. Brown, in his Treatise on the civil law (Vol. 1, B. 2, ch. 4, p. 202), deduces the conclusion that Mr. Fonblanque intended to say, that it did not involve such effects as that the heir of a mortgagor, also indebted by a bond to the mortgagee, should not redeem without also paying the bond debt and such like provisions known to our courts of equity. In this Mr. Brown thinks Mr. Fonblanque is incorrect; and he relies on the text of the code (Cod. Lib. 8, tit. 27, l. 1); *At si in possessione fueris constitutus; nisi ea quoque pecunia tibi a debitore reddatur vel offeratur, quæ sine pignore debetur, eam restituere propter exceptionem doli mali non cogaris. Jure enim contendis, debitores eam solam pecuniam, cujus nomine ea pignora obligaverunt, offerentes audiri non oportere, nisi pro illa etiam satisfecerint, quam mutuam simpliciter acceperunt. Quod in secundo creditore locum non habet; nec enim necessitas ei imponitur chirographarium etiam debitum priori creditori offerre. It is apparent that this passage merely respects the right of a mortgagee to tack, as against his own debtor, a second loan without security, when his debtor seeks to redeem. It does not touch the case of tacking so as to cut out an intermediate encumbrancer. Domat supports the text of Fonblanque (1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 1, § 3, art. 4, 7, 8). That, by the civil law, there can be a tacking of***

§ 416. Indeed, so little has this doctrine of tacking to commend itself, that it has stopped far short of the analogies, which would seem to justify its application;¹ and it has been confined to cases where the party, in whose favor it is allowed, is originally a *bond fide* purchaser of an interest in the land for a valuable consideration. Thus, if a puisne creditor, by judgment, or statute, or recognizance, should buy in a prior mortgage, he would not be allowed to tack his judgment to such a mortgage, so as to cut out a mesne mortgagee.² The reason is said to be, that a creditor can in no just sense be called a purchaser; for he does not advance his money upon the immediate credit of the land; and, by his judgment, he does not acquire any right in the land. He has neither *jus in re*, nor *jus ad rem*; but a mere lien upon the land, which may, or may not, afterwards be enforced upon it.³ But, if instead of being a judgment creditor, he were a third mortgagee, and should then purchase in a prior judgment, statute, or recognizance, in such case he would be entitled to tack both together. The reason for the diversity is, that in the latter case he did originally lend his money upon the credit of the land; but in the former he did not, but was only a general creditor, trusting to the general assets of his debtor.⁴

§ 417. The same principle applies to a first mortgagee lending to the mortgagor a further sum upon a statute or judgment. In such a case he will be entitled to retain against the mesne mortgagee, till both his mortgage, and statute or judgment are paid; for he lent his money originally upon the credit of the land; and it may well be presumed, that he lent the further sum upon the

debts, so as to cut out an intermediate encumbrance, seems contrary to the Dig. Lib. 20, tit. 4, l. 20; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 20, tit. 4, n. 10. See 2 Story on Eq. Jurisd. § 1010, note, where this subject is examined more at large. But see 1 Brown, Civil Law, 208, and 4 Kent, Comm. Lect. 58, p. 136, note (a); id. 175, 176 (4th edit.).

¹ See *Thornycraft v. Crockett*, 2 House of Lords Cases, 289.

² 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 3, § 1, note (a); id. B. 3, ch. 1, § 9, and note (n); *Brace v. Duchess of Marlborough*, 2 P. Will. 492 to 495; *Anon.*, 2 Ves. 662; *Morret v. Paske*, 2 Atk. 52, 53; *Ex parte Knott*, 11 Ves. 617; *Belchier v. Butler*, 1 Eden, 522, and Mr. Eden's note; *Lacey v. Ingle*, 2 Ph. Ch. 413. But see *Wright v. Pilling*, Prec. Ch. 499. [* See *Mayor of Brecon v. Seymour*, 26 Beavan, 548.]

³ *Ibid.*; *Averall v. Wade*, Lloyd & Goold's Rep. 252, 262.

⁴ *Ibid.*; *Higgin v. Lyddal*, 1 Ch. Cas. 149; *Mackreth v. Symmons*, 15 Ves. 354.

statute or judgment upon the same security, although it passed no present interest in the land, but gave a lien only.¹

§ 418. And yet, such a prior mortgagee, having a bond debt, has never been permitted to tack it against any intervening encumbrancers of a superior nature between his bond and mortgage; nor against other specialty creditors; nor even against the mortgagor himself; but only against his heir, to avoid circuitry of action.² The reason given is, that the bond debt, except in the hands of the heir, is not a charge on the land; and tacking takes place only when the party holds both securities in the same right. For if a prior mortgagee takes an assignment of a third mortgage, as a trustee only for another person, he will not be allowed to tack two mortgages together, to the prejudice of intervening encumbrancers.³ Neither is a mortgagee permitted to tack where the equity of redemption belongs to different persons, when the mortgagee's title to both estates occurs.⁴

§ 419. It cannot be denied, that some of these distinctions are extremely thin, and stand upon very artificial and unsatisfactory reasoning. The account of the matter given by Lord Hardwicke,⁵

¹ *Ibid.*; *Shepherd v. Titley*, 2 Atk. 352; *Ex parte Knott*, 11 Ves. 617; *Lacey v. Ingle*, 2 Phillips, Ch. 413. *A fortiori*, the same principle applies to the first mortgagee's lending on the second mortgage; for in such a case he positively lends on the credit of the land, and will be allowed to tack against a mesne encumbrancer. *Morret v. Paske*, 2 Atk. 53, 54. And even sums subsequently lent on notes, if distinctly agreed at the time to be on the security of the mortgaged property, will be allowed to be tacked. *Matthews v. Cartwright*, 2 Atk. 347; 2 Story on Eq. Jurisp. § 1010, note.

² *Powis v. Corbet*, 3 Atk. 556; *Lowthian v. Hasel*, 3 Brown, Ch. 163; *Morret v. Paske*, 2 Atk. 52, 53; *Shuttleworth v. Laycock*, 1 Vern. 245; *Coleman v. Winch*, 1 P. Will. 775; *Price v. Fastnedge*, *Ambler*, 685, and *Mr. Blunt's note*; *Troughton v. Troughton*, 1 Ves. 86; *Heams v. Bance*, 3 Atk. 630; *Jones v. Smith*, 2 Ves. Jr. 376; *Adams v. Claxton*, 6 Ves. 229; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 1, § 11; *id.* § 9, note (*u*). In the Roman law, rules somewhat different prevailed. While, as we have seen, tacking was not allowed against intermediate encumbrancers, the creditor himself was, as against his debtor, allowed to tack a subsequent debt contracted by his debtor after the mortgage. *Ante*, § 415, note, and *post*, § 420; 2 Story on Eq. Jurisp. § 1010, and note. See also 1 Brown, Civil Law, 202, and note 5; *id.* 20, 8; 4 Kent, Comm. Lect. 58, p. 136, and note; *id.* 175, 176 (2d and 3d edit.).

³ *Morret v. Paske*, 2 Atk. 53; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 1, § 9, and note (*u*).

⁴ *White v. Hillaire*, 5 Younge & Coll. 597, 609.

⁵ *Wortley v. Birkhead*, 2 Ves. 574; *ante*, § 415, p. 443. See *Berry v. Mutual Ins. Co.*, 2 Johns. Ch. 603, 608. Lord Rosslyn, in *Jones v. Smith* (2 Ves. Jr.

is probably the true one. But it is a little difficult to perceive how the foundation could support such a superstructure, or rather, why the intelligible equity of the case, upon the principles of natural justice, should not be rigorously applied to it. Courts of equity have found no difficulty in applying it, where the puisne encumbrancer has bought in a prior equitable encumbrance; for in such cases they have declared, that where the puisne encumbrancer has not obtained the legal title; or where the legal title is vested in a trustee; or where he takes *in autre droit*; the encumbrances shall be paid in the order of their priority in point of time, according to the maxim above mentioned.¹ The reasonable principle is here adopted, that he who has the better right to call for the legal title, or for its protection, shall prevail.²

§ 420. The civil law has proceeded upon a far more intelligible and just doctrine on this subject. It wholly repudiates the doctrine of tacking; and gives the fullest effect to the maxim, *Qui*

377), said: "Why a bond is not upon the same footing, I do not know. It is impossible to say why a bond may not be tacked to a mortgage as well as one mortgage to another." The asserted ground doubtless is, that a bond debt is no lien on the land, whereas a mortgage and judgment are. This may be still more distinctly shown by the rule, that a mortgagee of a copyhold estate cannot tack a judgment to his mortgage; the reason is, that a judgment does not affect or bind copyhold estates. *Heir of Carmore v. Parke*, 6 Vin. Abridg. p. 222, pl. 6; cited 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 1, § 9, and note (u); *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1, p. 190, 191.*

¹ *Brace v. Duchess of Marlborough*, 2 P. Will. 495; *Ex parte Knott*, 11 Ves. 618; *Berry v. Mutual Ins. Co.*, 2 Johns. Ch. 608; *Frere v. More*, 8 Price, 475; *Barnett v. Weston*, 12 Ves. 130; *Price v. Fastnedge*, Ambler, 685, and Mr. Blunt's note; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1, 2, p. 191, 193, 194*; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, and note (e); *Pomfret v. Windsor*, 2 Ves. 472, 486; *Brandlyn v. Ord*, 1 Atk. 571.

² *Ibid.*; *Medlicott v. O'Donel*, 1 B. & Beatt. 171; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2. In America, the doctrine of tacking is never allowed as against mesne encumbrances, which are duly registered, for the plain reason, that the Registry Acts are held, not only to be constructive notice, but the Acts themselves, in effect, declare the priority to be fixed by the registration. *Grant v. Bisset*, 1 Caines, Cas. in Err. 112; *Frost v. Beekman*, 1 Johns. Ch. 298, 299; *Parkist v. Alexander*, 1 Johns. Ch. 398, 399; *St. Andrew's Church v. Tomkins*, 7 Johns. Ch. 14; *Osborn v. Carr*, 12 Conn. 196; *Averill v. Guthrie*, 8 Dane, 82. The same doctrine exists in other Registry countries. *Latouche v. Lord Dunsaney*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 137, 157. As to tacking in cases of personal property, see 2 Story, Eq. Jurisp. § 1034, 1035.

prior est in tempore, potior est in jure; excluding it only in cases of fraud, or of consent, or of a superior equity.¹

§ 421. But, whatever may be thought as to the foundation of the doctrine of tacking in courts of equity, it is now firmly established. It is, however, to be taken with this most important qualification, that the party who seeks to avail himself of it is a *bond fide* purchaser, without notice of the prior encumbrance, at the time when he took his original security; for if he then had such notice, he has not the slightest claim to the protection or assistance of a court of equity; and he will not be allowed, by purchasing in such prior encumbrance, to tack his own tainted mortgage or other title to the latter.²

§ 421 *a*. Questions bearing a close analogy to that of tacking have also arisen, involving equities between parties asserting adverse rights. Thus, for example, where a mortgagee takes a mortgage and a covenant from sureties to pay the mortgage money, and afterwards he advanced an additional sum to the mortgagor, and took a second mortgage therefor on the premises, and subsequently he brought his action against the sureties, and recovered the amount of the first mortgage debt from them; but he refused to give up the first mortgage, or to assign it to the sureties, without being paid the second advance, and they brought a suit against him to compel an assignment to them of the first mortgage; the question arose, whether they had a right to an assignment of the first mortgage, without paying the second advance. It was held, that they had no priority, and before they would compel an assignment, they must pay the second advance.³

¹ See Dig. Lib. 20, tit. 4, l. 16; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 20, tit. 4, § 1, n. 1 to 32; 1 Domat, B. 3, tit. 1, § 6, art. 6; *ante*, § 415, p. 451, note; § 418, note (1); 2 Story on Eq. Jurisp. § 1010, and note.

² 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 3, § 1, note (b); *id.* B. 2, ch. 6, § 2, and note (i); *Brace v. Duchess of Marlborough*, 2 P. Will. 491, 495; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 16, 17; *Green v. Slater*, 4 Johns. Ch. 38; *Toulmin v. Steere*, 3 Meriv. 210; *Powell on Mortgages*, by Coventry, vol. 2, p. 454, note A.; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 A. 10, 4 I. 3, 4, I. 4, 4 W. 28; 4 Kent, Comm. Lect. 58, p. 176 to 179 (4th edit.); *post*, § 434; *Redfearn v. Ferrier*, 1 Dow, 50. But see *Davies v. Austen*, 1 Ves. Jr. 247; *Johnson v. Brown*, 2 Younge & Coll. N. R. 268; *Lacey v. Ingle*, 2 Phillips, Ch. 413.

Williams v. Owen, The (English) Jurist, 30 Dec. 1843, p. 1145; *post*, § 499, 499 *a*. [*This proposition seems questionable, to say the least. See *Smith v. Day*. 23 Vt. 656.]

§ 421 b. There are other cases, standing, indeed, upon a firmer ground than that of the mere right of tacking, where a subsequent assignee or encumbrancer of equitable property may acquire a priority over an elder assignee or encumbrancer of the same property, by his exercise of superior diligence, and doing acts which will give him a better claim or protection in equity.¹ Thus, for example, a second encumbrancer upon equitable property, who has given notice of his title to the trustees of the property, will be preferred to a prior encumbrancer, who has omitted to give the like notice of his title to the trustees; for the notice is an effectual protection against any subsequent dealing on the part of the trustees.² So the second assignee of the interest of the assignor,

¹ *Foster v. Blackstone*, 1 Mylne & Keen, 297; *Timson v. Ramsbottom*, 2 Keen, 35; *ante*, 399, note.

² *Ibid.*; *ante*, 399, note; *post*, § 1035 a, 1047, 1057; *Etty v. Bridges*, 2 Younge & Coll. 488, 492. In this case, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Bruce said: "That notice should be given to the trustee of a fund upon dealing with an equitable interest in it, is not, I apprehend, so much a rule as an example, or instance, or effect of a rule. In *Dearle v. Hall* (3 Russ. 1), we find Lord Lyndhurst thus expressing himself: 'In cases like the present, the act of giving the trustee notice is, in a certain degree, taking possession of the fund; it is going as far towards equitable possession as it is possible to go; for after notice given, the trustee of a fund becomes a trustee for the assignee who has given him notice.' Sir Thomas Plumer's previous observations in the same case, which occur between the 20th and the 28th pages of the same volume, are, with more minuteness of detail, to the same effect. The opinions of the judges, in *Ryall v. Rowles* (1 Ves. 348, 1 Atk. 165), of which that of Mr. Justice Burnett has been reported from his notebook by Mr. Blich (9 Blich, n. s. 578), contain recognitions of the same principle. So the opinion in *Foster v. Cockerell* (9 Blich, n. s. 332), of Lord Lyndhurst, upon advising the House of Lords to affirm Sir John Leach's decision in *Foster v. Blackstone* (1 Mylne & Keen, 297), in which case the latter learned judge had before thus expressed himself: 'A better equity is where a second encumbrancer, without notice, takes a protection against a subsequent encumbrancer, which the prior encumbrancer has neglected to take. Thus, a declaration of trust of an outstanding term accompanied by delivery of the deeds creating and continuing the term, gives a better equity than the mere declaration of trust to a prior encumbrancer.' These authorities, though not the only authorities, are, I apprehend, more than sufficient to show the rule to be, that to perfect a transaction of the description now in question, the purchaser or encumbrancer must, if he cannot acquire possession, go as near it as he can, as the circumstances of the case will permit, must in a sense, if the expression may be used, set his mark upon the property, or do every thing reasonably practicable to prevent it from being dealt with in fraud of an innocent purchaser afterwards. The law has held, that generally, where there are trustees, this is done sufficiently, upon dealing with an equitable interest in the fund, by giving them notice; because,

in the residuary estate of a testator, who has given notice to the executors thereof, will be preferred to a prior assignee, who has given no such notice.¹ So, it is said to be a better equity, where a second encumbrancer takes a protection against a subsequent encumbrancer, which the prior encumbrancer neglected to take. Thus, a declaration of trust of an outstanding term, accompanied by a delivery of the deeds, creating and continuing the term, will give a better equity than a mere declaration of trust taken by a prior encumbrancer.²

§ 421 *c*. A different doctrine is maintained in some of the States of America; for it is there held that, as between different assignees of a *chose in action*, he who is first in time is first in right, notwithstanding he has given no notice to the debtor or the subsequent assignee. The debtor will, however, be protected, if he has made payment to the second assignee before notice of the prior assignment.³

§ 422. Another instance of the application of this wholesome doctrine of constructive fraud, arising from notice, may be seen in the dealings with executors and other persons, holding a fiduciary character, and third persons colluding with them in violation of their trust. Thus, purchases from executors of the personal property of their testator are ordinarily obligatory and valid, not-

although the notice does not necessarily prevent such a fraud, it renders its commission much less likely, and gives an increased probability, or an increased chance of redress, if the fraud shall be committed, supposing reasonable diligence to be used; inasmuch, as not only will the trustees, if asked, be likely to give the information of the notice, but if they shall fail to do so, they may be liable to make good the loss. It is obvious, however, that unfairness or forgetfulness, or negligence on a trustee's part, or his death, or infirmity, may render the notice, as a prevention of fraud, useless."

¹ *Timson v. Ramsbottom*, 2 Keen, 35; *post*, § 1035 *a*, 1047, 1057.

² *Foster v. Blackstone*, 1 Mylne & Keen, 297. But it will not create a prior equity in a subsequent encumbrancer, that he claims by a legal title, and the prior encumbrancer claims by an equitable title; for if notice has been duly given by the latter, his title will prevail. *Ibid*. It is now also settled, that an inquiry of the legal holder of equitable property, as to the state of the title, is not necessary to give effect to a notice by a subsequent assignee, so as to entitle him to a priority over a prior assignee, who has given no notice. *Timson v. Ramsbottom*, 2 Keen, 35.

³ *Muir v. Schenck*, 3 Hill, 228. See *Story on Conflict of Laws*, § 328, 330. See also *Murray v. Lichburn*, 2 Johns. Ch. Cas. 441, 443; *post*, § 1039; *Redfearn v. Ferrier*, 1 Dow, 550; *Davies v. Austen*, 1 Ves. Jr. 247; *Story on Conflict of Laws*, § 375, 396; *James v. Morey*, 2 Cowen, 246.

withstanding they may be affected with some peculiar trusts or equities in the hands of the executors. For the purchaser cannot be presumed to know that the sale may not be required in order to discharge the debts of the testator, for which they are legally bound, before all other claims.¹ But, if the purchaser knows that the executor is wasting and turning the testator's estate into money, the more easily to run away with it, or for any other unlawful purpose, he will be deemed *particeps criminis*, and his purchase set aside as fraudulent.²

§ 423. The reason for this diversity of doctrine has been fully stated, by Sir William Grant. "It is true" (said he) "that executors are, in equity, mere trustees for the performance of the will; yet in many respects, and for many purposes, third persons are entitled to consider them absolute owners. The mere circumstance that they are executors will not vitiate any transaction with them; for the power of disposition is generally incident, being frequently necessary. And a stranger shall not be put to examine whether, in the particular instance, that power has been discreetly exercised. But, from that proposition, that a third person is not bound to look to the trust in every respect, and for every purpose, it does not follow that, dealing with the executor for the assets, he may equally look upon him as absolute owner, and wholly overlook his character as trustee, when he knows the executor is ap-

¹ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2, and notes (k) and (l); *Humble v. Bill*, 2 Vern. 444; *Ewer v. Corbet*, 2 P. Will. 148; *McLeod v. Drummond*, 14 Ves. 359; s. c. 17 Ves. 154, 155; *Hill v. Simpson*, 7 Ves. 166; *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Dick. 712, 725; *Newland on Contr.* ch. 36, p. 512, 513, 514; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 W. 29; *Rayner v. Pearsall*, 3 Johns. Ch. 578. This doctrine was overthrown in the case of *Humble v. Bill* (or *Savage*), upon appeal to the House of Lords. 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. 71. It was, however, reasserted in *Ewer v. Corbet*, 2 P. Will. 148; *Nugent v. Gifford*, 1 Atk. 463; *Elliot v. Merryman*, 2 Atk. 42; *Ithell v. Beane*, 1 Ves. 215; *Mead v. Lord Orrery*, 3 Atk. 235; *Dickinson v. Lockyer*, 4 Ves. 36; *Hill v. Simpson*, 7 Ves. 152; *Taylor v. Hawkins*, 8 Ves. 209; *McLeod v. Drummond*, 14 Ves. 352; s. c. 17 Ves. 153. In this last case, the whole of the authorities were examined at large by Lord Eldon, and commented on with his usual acuteness. See also *Andrew v. Wrigley*, 4 Bro. Ch. 125.

² *Worseley v. De Mattos*, 1 Burr. 475; *Ewer v. Corbet*, 2 P. Will. 148; *Mead v. Lord Orrery*, 3 Atk. 235, 237; *Benfield v. Solomons*, 9 Ves. 86, 87; *Hill v. Simpson*, 7 Ves. 152; *McLeod v. Drummond*, 14 Ves. 359; s. c. 17 Ves. 153; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 36, p. 513; 1 *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 228, 229, 230; *Drohan v. Drohan*, 1 Ball & Beatt. 185; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 W. 28; *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Bro. Ch. 431; 2 *Dick.* 712, 725; *Bonny v. Ridgard*, cited 2 Bro. Ch. 438; 4 Bro. Ch. 130; *Scott v. Nesbit*, 2 Bro. Ch. 641; s. c. 2 *Cox*, 183.

plying the assets to a purpose wholly foreign to his trust. No decision necessarily leads to such a consequence."¹ The same doctrine is applied to the cases of executors or administrators colluding with the debtors to the estate, either to retain or to waste the assets; for, in such cases, the creditors will be allowed to sue the debtors directly in equity, making the executor or administrator also a party to the bill; although, ordinarily, the executor or administrator only can sue for the debts due to the deceased.² So, in cases of collusion between a mortgagor and mortgagee, a creditor or annuitant of the mortgagor may have a right to redeem, and to call for an account; although, ordinarily, such a right belongs only to the mortgagor, and his heirs and privies in estate.³ Indeed, the doctrine may be even more generally stated; that he who has voluntarily concurred in the commission of a fraud by another, shall never be permitted to obtain a profit thereby against those who have been thus defrauded.

§ 424. It seems at one time to have been thought, that no person but a creditor, or a specific legatee of the property, could question the validity of a disposition made of assets by an executor, however fraudulent it might be. But that doctrine is so repugnant to true principles, that it could scarcely be maintained whenever it came to be thoroughly sifted.⁴ It is now well understood that pecuniary and residuary legatees may question the validity of such a disposition; and, indeed, residuary legatees stand upon a stronger ground than pecuniary legatees generally; for, in a sense, they have a lien on the fund, and may go into equity to enforce it upon the fund.⁵

¹ *Hill v. Simpson*, 7 Ves. 166.

² *Holland v. Prior*, 1 Mylne & Keen, 240; *Newland v. Champion*, 1 Ves. 106; *Doran v. Simpson*, 4 Ves. 651; *Alsager v. Rowley*, 6 Ves. 748; *Beckley v. Dorrington*, West, 169; *post*, § 581, note, § 828; *Story on Equity Pleadings*, § 178, 514; *Burroughs v. Elton*, 11 Ves. 29; *Benfield v. Solomons*, 9 Ves. 86.

³ *White v. Parnter*, 1 Knapp, 179, 229; *Troughton v. Binkes*, 6 Ves. 572.

⁴ *Mead v. Lord Orrery*, 3 Atk. 235; 14 Ves. 361; 17 Ves. 169.

⁵ *Hill v. Simpson*, 7 Ves. 152; *McLeod v. Drummond*, 14 Ves. 359; s. c. 17 Ves. 169; *Bonny v. Ridgard*, cited 2 Bro. Ch. 438; 4 Bro. Ch. 130; 17 Ves. 165. *Mr. Maddock* (1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 230) states, that "Residuary and general legatees, and, as it seems, co-executors, are never permitted to question the disposition which the executors have made of the assets. But creditors, and specific and pecuniary legatees, may follow either legal or equitable assets into the hands of third persons, to whom fraud is imputable." It appears to me, that the cases above cited, and especially that of *McLeod v. Drummond*, 14 Ves. 353; s. c. 17 Ves. 153, establish a different conclusion.

§ 425. The last class of cases which it is proposed to consider under the present head of constructive fraud, is that of voluntary conveyances of real estate, in regard to subsequent purchasers.¹ This class is founded, in a great measure, if not altogether, upon the provisions of the statute of 27th of Elizabeth, ch. 4, which has been already alluded to. The object of that statute was, to give full protection to subsequent purchasers from the grantor, against mere volunteers, under prior conveyances. As between the parties themselves, such conveyances are positively binding, and cannot be disturbed; for the statute does not reach such cases.²

§ 426. It was for a long period of time a much litigated question in England, whether the effect of the statute was to avoid all voluntary conveyances (that is, all such as were made merely in consideration of natural love or affection, or were mere gifts), although made *bonâ fide*, in favor of all subsequent purchasers, with or without notice; or whether it applied only to conveyances made with a fraudulent intent, and to purchasers without notice. After no inconsiderable diversity of judicial opinion, the doctrine has at length been established in England (whether in conformity to the language or intent of the statute is exceedingly questionable), that all such conveyances are void as to subsequent purchasers, whether they are purchasers with or without notice, although the original conveyance was *bonâ fide*, and without the slightest admixture of intentional fraud; upon the ground that the statute in every such case infers fraud, and will not suffer the presumption to be gainsaid.³ The doctrine, however, is admitted to be full of

¹ The statute does not extend to conveyances of personal property, but only to conveyances of real property. *Jones v. Croucher*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 315. See *Bohn v. Headley*, 7 H. & J. 257.

² *Petre v. Espinasse*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 496; *Bill v. Cureton*, id. 503, 510; *In re Grant*, 2 Story, 313; *Hopkirk v. Randolph*, 2 Brock. 133; *Hudnol v. Wilder*, 4 McCord, 295.

³ *Doe v. Manning*, 9 East, 58; *Pulvertoft v. Pulvertoft*, 18 Ves. 84, 86, 111; *Buckle v. Mitchell*, 18 Ves. 100; *Cotterell v. Homer*, 13 Simons, 506; Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 C. 7; *Sterry v. Arden*, 1 Johns. Ch. 261, 267 to 271; Com. Dig. *Covin*, B. 3, 4; Sugden on Vendors, ch. 16, § 1, art. 1, 2. [See the late case of *Tarlton v. Liddell*, 7 Eng. Law & Eq. 360.] The elaborate judgment of Lord Ellenborough, in *Doe v. Manning* (9 East, 58), contains a large survey of the authorities, to which the learned reader is referred. See also 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 421 to 427; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 3, and notes (*f*) and (*g*); Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1, p. 188 to 192; Newland on Contracts, ch. 34, p. 391; 2 Hovenden on Frauds, ch. 18, p. 73, &c.; Belt's Suppt. to Vesey,

difficulties; and it has been confirmed, rather upon the pressure of authorities, and the vast extent to which titles have been acquired and held under it, than upon any notion that it has a firm foundation in reason and a just construction of the statute. The rule, *stare decisis*, has here been applied to give repose and security to titles fairly acquired, upon the faith of judicial decisions.¹

§ 427. In America, a like diversity of judicial opinion has been exhibited. Mr. Chancellor Kent has held the English doctrine obligatory, as the true result of the authorities. But, at the same time, he is strongly inclined to the opinion, that, where the purchaser has had actual (and not merely constructive) notice, it ought not to prevail.² When the same case, in which this opinion was declared, came before the Court of Errors of New York, Mr. Chief-Justice Spencer delivered an elaborate opinion against the English doctrine, and asserted that no voluntary conveyance, not originally fraudulent, was within the statute. The Court of Errors, on that occasion, left the question open for future decision.³ But the doctrine of Mr. Chief-Justice Spencer has been asserted in the Supreme Court of the same State at a later period.⁴

§ 428. The question does not seem, positively, to have been adjudged in Massachusetts. But, in an important case of a voluntary conveyance (which was adjudged to be intentionally

25, 26; Atherley on Marr. Sett. ch. 13, p. 187, &c., 193, 194; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 4, p. 408 to 411; Pulvertoft v. Pulvertoft, 18 Ves. 84, 86, 111; Doe v. Routledge, Cowper, 711, 712. Mr. Fonblanque has assailed the doctrine that a purchaser with notice should still be entitled to prevail against the *bonâ fide* voluntary conveyance, with great force of reasoning. He asserts, that it amounts to an encouragement on the part of the purchaser, of a breach of that respect which is morally due to the fair claims of others; and that it may render the provisions of a statute, intended by the legislature to be preventive of fraud, the most effectual instrument of accomplishing it. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 13, note (g). To which it may be added, that it affords a temptation, nay, a premium and justification on the part of the grantor, to violate those obligations which his own voluntary conveyance imports, and which, in conscience and sound morals, he is bound to hold sacred.

¹ Ibid.

² Sterry v. Arden, 1 Johns. Ch. 261, 270, 271; s. c. 12 Johns. 536.

³ Sterry v. Arden, 12 Johns, 536, 554 to 559.

⁴ Jackson v. Town, 4 Cowen, 603, 604. See Seward v. Jackson, 8 Cowen, 406; Wickes v. Clarke, 8 Paige, 165.

fraudulent), the court said: "That deed conveyed his (the grantor's) title to the plaintiff, as against the grantor, and *every other person*, unless it was *fraudulent* at the time of its execution, in which case it was void against creditors and subsequent purchasers."¹ From this language it is certainly a just inference, that voluntary conveyances, *bonâ fide* made, are, in that State, valid against subsequent purchasers. [And this doctrine has been distinctly affirmed in a late case in that State, where the authorities on this subject were critically examined.²]

§ 429. The Supreme Court of the United States have come to the same conclusion; and it may be fit here to state the grounds of that opinion, as given by the Chief Justice, in delivering the judgment of the court. "The statute of Elizabeth is in force in this district [of Columbia]. The rule, which has been uniformly observed by this court in construing statutes, is to adopt the construction made by the courts of the country, by whose legislature the statute was enacted. This rule may be susceptible of some modification when applied to British statutes, which are adopted in many of these States. By adopting them, they become our own as entirely as if they had been enacted by the legislature of the State. The received construction in England, at the time

¹ *Ricker v. Ham*, 14 Mass. 139. And see Mr. Bigelow's note, *Big. Dig. Conveyance*, p. 200.

² [*Beal v. Warren*, 2 Gray, 446. *Thomas, J.*, there said: "The true construction of the statute we think is, that conveyances are not avoided merely because they are voluntary, but because they are fraudulent; that a voluntary gift of real estate is valid as against subsequent purchasers and all other persons, unless it was fraudulent at the time of its execution; that a subsequent conveyance for a valuable consideration is evidence, but by no means conclusive evidence, of fraud in the first voluntary conveyance; and that a voluntary gift made when the grantor is not indebted, in good faith, and without intent to defraud future creditors or subsequent purchasers, is good as against a subsequent purchaser for valuable consideration with notice. Such we understand to be the construction practically adopted in this commonwealth, and which is, to use the words of Chancellor Kent, 'the better American doctrine.' 4 Kent, Com. (6th edit.) 463, note; *Bennett v. Bedford Bank*, 11 Mass. 421; *Ricker v. Ham*, 14 Mass. 137; *Salmon v. Bennett*, 1 Conn. 525; *Cathcart v. Robinson*, 5 Pet. 280; *Jackson v. Town*, 4 Cow. 603; 1 Story on Eq. § 427, *et seq.*; 1 Cruise Dig. (Greenl. edit.) tit. 7, ch. 2, § 7, note; 1 Amer. Lead. Cas. (3d edit.) 78."] [* This entire opinion is an able exposition of the law upon the subject, and is eminently deserving the careful consideration and study of all who desire to find a full and careful analysis of the principles developed by the numerous cases bearing upon the question.]

they were admitted to operate in this country, indeed, to the time of our separation from the British empire, may very properly be considered as accompanying the statutes themselves, and forming an integral part of them. But, however we may respect subsequent decisions (and certainly they are entitled to great respect), we do not admit their absolute authority. If the English courts vary their construction of a statute, which is common to the two countries, we do not hold ourselves bound to fluctuate with them.

§ 430. "At the commencement of the American Revolution, the construction of the statute of 27th of Elizabeth seems not to have been settled. The leaning of the courts towards the opinion, that every voluntary settlement should be deemed void as to a subsequent purchaser, was very strong; and few cases are to be found, in which such a conveyance has been sustained. But these decisions seem to have been made on the principle, that such subsequent sale furnished a strong presumption of a fraudulent intent, which threw on the person, claiming under the settlement, the burden of proving it from the settlement itself, or from extrinsic circumstances, to be made in good faith, rather than as furnishing conclusive evidence not to be repelled by any circumstances whatever.

§ 431. "There is some contrariety and some ambiguity in the old cases on the subject. But this court conceives that the modern decisions, establishing the absolute conclusiveness of a subsequent sale, to fix fraud on a family settlement, made without valuable consideration, — fraud not to be repelled by any circumstances whatever, — go beyond the construction which prevailed at the American Revolution; and ought not to be followed.

§ 432. "The universally received doctrine of that day unquestionably went as far as this. A subsequent sale without notice, by a person who had made a settlement not on a valuable consideration, was presumptive evidence of fraud; which threw on those claiming under such settlement the burden of proving that it was made *bonâ fide*. This principle, therefore, according to the uniform course of this court, must be adopted in construing the statute of 27th of Elizabeth, as it applies to this case."¹

[* § 432 a. Where a bond given by the father to his son, for the

¹ *Cathcart v. Robinson*, 5 Peters, 280.

payment of a sum of money at his decease, was assigned by the son, in contemplation of marriage, to the trustees of his marriage settlement, for the benefit of his wife and children, it was held, the trustees must be regarded as *bond fide* specialty creditors, it not appearing that the obligor, when he executed the bond, was in insolvent circumstances.¹

§ 432 b. The rule seems well established in the American courts, that a voluntary conveyance or mere gift, for the settlement of a child, made by one in such pecuniary condition, as to be entirely responsible for all his indebtedness, notwithstanding, is not to be held void as against creditors, either past or future, since there is no presumptive fraudulent intent, and the transaction is a natural and allowable disposition of property. Thus it was held in an early case in Vermont, where the authorities were very extensively and carefully examined,² that where one in prosperous circumstances, and not largely indebted, in consideration of natural love and affection, made a voluntary conveyance of a portion of his estate to his daughter, leaving amply sufficient to pay all he owed, that such conveyance was good against a subsequent mortgage given to secure a debt existing before the conveyance to the daughter. And it was held that it would not affect the validity of the latter conveyance, that the grantor subsequently, by unforeseen events, became embarrassed, and unable to pay all his debts existing at its date. And in a recent decision in Kentucky³ it was held that if the grantor be not indebted, at the date of a voluntary conveyance to his wife, or a child, to such an extent that it will deprive the creditors of an ample fund for the payment of their debts, and there be no purpose of defrauding creditors, either existing or contemplated, the conveyance will be upheld in a court of equity. But it was held in another case,⁴ that

¹ [* *Payne v. Mortimer*, 5 Jur. n. s. 749; s. c. 5 Jur. n. s. 307; s. c. 1 Giff. 118; s. c. 28 L. J. n. s. Ch. 437, 716.]

² *Brackett v. Waite*, 4 Vt. 389; s. c. 6 id. 411; *Holley v. Adams*, 16 id. 209.

³ *Duhine v. Young*, 3 Bush. 343.

⁴ *Enders v. Williams*, 1 Met. (Ky.) 347. The cases are very numerous in the late English equity reports, where conveyances claimed to have been fraudulent under the statutes of the 13 & 27 Eliz. have been considered and determined.

Where a trader not embarrassed at the time, voluntarily conveys all his real and personal estate, present and future, including his stock in trade to a trustee for the benefit of his wife and children, but with the proviso that the stock in trade should remain under his control during his life, and becomes bankrupt five

a distinction is to be made, so far as creditors are concerned, between a voluntary conveyance to children and strangers; and that in the former case, where there is no actual fraudulent intent, and the gift is a reasonable advancement to the child with reference to the grantor's means, and ample property, unencumbered is retained for the payment of debts, the conveyance is good.]

§ 433. The doctrine as to subsequent conveyances of the grantor, avoiding prior voluntary conveyances, applies in England only to purchasers strictly and properly so called,¹ for, as between voluntary conveyances, the first prevails; unless the last be for the payment of debts, which, indeed, can scarcely, under such circumstances, be called voluntary.² [So, a voluntary conveyance by a woman in contemplation of marriage, without the knowledge of her future husband, is not avoided by the marriage, under the 27 Eliz. ch. 4, since the husband does not take as a purchaser.³] The doctrine is also to be understood with this qualification, that the first conveyance is *bonâ fide*; for, if it is years afterwards, it was held void as to all the property as to subsequent creditors, on the ground of fraudulent intent. *Ware v. Gardner*, 17 W. R. 439; s. c. L. R. 7 Eq. 317.

An assignment of substantially all the debtor's property for the benefit of five of his creditors, was upheld under the statute of 13 Eliz., and distinguished from a preference under the bankruptcy act, in *Alton v. Harrison*, 17 W. R. 1034, before the Vice-Chancellor Stuart, and affirmed by Lord-Justice Giffard, L. R. 4 Ch. App. 622. The ground of declaring voluntary conveyances void as to creditors, is further described in *Reese River Silver Mining Co. v. Atwell*, 17 W. R. 601 (M. R.); Law Rep. 7 Eq. 347. See also *Beyful v. Bullock*, Law Rep. 7 Eq. 391; s. c. 17 W. R. 526.

A deed will be held void which conveys the grantor's estate to different trusts after his decease from those covenanted for in a former deed. *Phelp v. Amcotts*, 17 W. R. 703.

¹ It extends to a mortgagee, however. *Ledyard v. Butler*, 9 Paige, 132. But not to one who buys at a sheriff's sale. *Ridgway v. Underwood*, 4 Wash. 129.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 12; id. B. 1, ch. 5, § 2, and note (*h*); Jeremy on Equity Jurisd. B. 2, ch. 3, p. 283, § 25; *Atherley on Marr. Sett.* ch. 13, p. 185; *Goodwin v. Goodwin*, 1 Ch. Rep. 92 [173]; *Clavering v. Clavering*, 2 Vern. 473; s. c. Prec. Ch. 235; s. c. 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. 122; *Villers v. Beaumont*, 1 Vern. 100; *Allen v. Arme*, 1 Vern. 365; *Earl of Bath and Montague's case*, 3 Ch. Cas. 88, 89, 93; *Chadwick v. Doleman*, 2 Vern. 530, 531; *Boughton v. Boughton*, 1 Atk. 625; *Worrall v. Jacob*, 3 Meriv. 256, 269; *Sear v. Ashwell*, 3 Swanst. 411, note.

³ [*Doe d. Richards v. Lewis*, 5 Eng. Law & Eq. 400. But the deed might have been bad, if it had been found as a fact that it was intended as a fraud on marital rights.]

fraudulent, the second will prevail.¹ But then, in cases between different volunteers, a court of equity will generally not interfere, but will leave the parties where it finds them as to title. It will not aid one against another; neither will it enforce a voluntary contract.² It has been said that there are exceptions, and that

¹ *Naldred v. Gilham*, 1 P. Will. 580, 581; *Colton v. King*, 2 P. Will. 359; *Cecil v. Butcher*, 2 Jac. & Walk. 573 to 578; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25; *Viers v. Montgomery*, 4 Cranch, 177; *ante*, § 426.

² *Pulvertoft v. Pulvertoft*, 18 Ves. 91, 93, 99; *Colman v. Sarrel*, 1 Ves. Jr. 52, 54; *Ellison v. Ellison*, 6 Ves. 656; *Antrobus v. Smith*, 12 Ves. 39; *Ex parte Pye*, 18 Ves. 140; 1 *White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas.* 420, and notes; *Minturn v. Seymour*, 4 Johns. Ch. 500; *Atherley on Marr. Sett.* ch. 13, p. 186; *id.* ch. 5, p. 125, 131 to 145; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25, and notes (e) and (i); *id.* B. 1, ch. 5, § 2, and note (h); § 3; *Ex parte Pye*, 18 Ves. 149. This doctrine, however, is to be understood with proper qualifications. If there be a voluntary contract, *inter vivos*, and something remains to be done to give it effect, as, for example, if there be a voluntary contract to transfer stock, and the stock is not transferred, a court of equity will not enforce the transfer. But if the stock is actually transferred, then a court of equity will enforce all the rights growing out of the transfer against anybody. *Ellison v. Ellison*, 6 Ves. 662; *Colman v. Sarrel*, 1 Ves. Jr. 50; *Pulvertoft v. Pulvertoft*, 18 Ves. 91, 93, 99. So in the case of a voluntary assignment of a bond, even where the bond is not delivered, but is kept in possession of the assignor, a court of equity, in the administration of the assets of the assignor, would consider the bond as a debt due to the assignee, no farther act remaining to be done by the assignor. There is a plain distinction between an assignment of stock, where the stock has not been transferred, and an assignment of a bond. In the former case, the material act (the transfer) remains to be done by the grantor; and nothing is in fact done which will entitle the assignee to the aid of the court until the stock is transferred; whereas the court will admit the assignee of a bond as a creditor. Upon this ground, where A. made a voluntary assignment of a policy upon his own life to trustees, for the benefit of his sister and her children, if they should outlive him; and he delivered the deed of assignment to one of the trustees, but he kept the policy in his own possession; and afterwards surrendered the policy to the office for a valuable consideration; and afterwards a bill was brought against A. by the surviving trustee in the deed, to have the policy replaced; it was decreed accordingly. The court said that the gift of the policy was complete without a delivery; that no act remained to be done by the grantor to complete the title of the trustees; and, therefore, it was not a case where the court was called upon to assist a volunteer. *Fortescue v. Barnett*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 36. On the other hand, if something remains to be done to give effect to the voluntary act or contract, a court of equity will not interfere to aid the party. Thus, where a testator had indorsed upon the back of a bond of his debtor, "I do hereby forgive the said A. B. the sum of £700, part of the within sum of £1,200, for which he is indebted to me"; and afterwards died; and a suit was brought against the debtor at law for the full amount of the bond; and a bill was brought by him against the exec-

they stand upon special grounds, such as the interference of courts of equity in favor of settlements upon a wife and children, for whom the party is under a natural and moral obligation to pro-

utor for an injunction to restrain further proceedings in the action, on the payment of all sums due on the bond, except the £700, the court refused to interfere saying, that the plaintiff gave no consideration for the alleged release; and that, as the plaintiff was a mere volunteer, he had no right to come into equity for relief. In truth, there was no technical valid release at law; and the court was asked to supply this defect. *Tuffnell v. Constable*, 8 Sim. 69. See *Flower v. Marten*, 2 Mylne & Craig, 459, 474, 475; *post*, § 706, 706 a. Upon similar grounds, where an obligee of a bond, five days before her death, signed a memorandum not under seal, which was indorsed on the bond, and which purported to be an assignment of the bond without any consideration, and at the same time delivered the bond to the assignee; it was held by the Lord Chancellor that the circumstances of the case did not constitute it a *donatio mortis causâ* because it was unconditional; and that the gift was incomplete as an absolute gift; and, as it was without consideration, it could not be enforced by the assignee. *Edward v. Jones*, 1 Mylne & Craig, 226; s. c. 7 Sim. 325. See *Antrobus v. Smith*, 12 Ves. 39. See also *Duffield v. Elwes*, 1 Bligh, 493, 529, 530, n. s., where Lord Eldon said: "The principle, which is applied in the decision of this case, is the principle upon which courts of equity refuse to complete voluntary conveyances. No court of equity will compel a completion of them, and throughout the whole of what I have now read, the donor is considered as a party who may refuse to complete the intent he has expressed. But I think that is a misapprehension; because nothing can be more clear than that this *donatio mortis causâ* must be a gift made by a donor in contemplation of the conceived approach of death; that the title is not complete till he is actually dead; and that the question, therefore, never can be, what the donor can be compelled to do, but what the donee, in the case of a *donatio mortis causâ*, can call upon the representatives, real or personal, of that donor to do. The question is this, whether the act of the donor being, as far as the act of the donor itself is to be viewed, complete, the persons who represent that donor, in respect of personalty, — the executor in respect of realty, — and the heir-at-law, are not bound to complete that which as far as the act of the donor is concerned in the question was incomplete. In other words, where it is the gift of a personal chattel, or the gift of a deed, which is the subject of the *donatio mortis causâ*, whether, after the death of the individual who made that gift, the executor is not to be considered a trustee for the donee; and whether, on the other hand, if it be a gift affecting the real estate, — and I distinguish now between a security upon land and the land itself, — whether, if it be a gift of such an interest in law, the heir-at-law of the testator is not, by virtue of the operation of the trust, which is created, not by indenture, but a bequest, arising from operation of law, a trustee for that donee. I apprehend that really the question does not turn at all upon what the donor could do, or what the donor could not do. But if it was a good *donatio mortis causâ*, what the donee of that donor could call upon the representatives of the donor to do, after the death of that donor."

vide.¹ But, although the doctrine in favor of such exceptions has been maintained by highly respectable authority, yet it must be now deemed entirely overthrown by the weight of more recent adjudications, in which it has been declared that the court will not execute a voluntary contract, and that the principle of the court to withhold its assistance from a volunteer, applies equally whether he seeks to have the benefit of a contract, a covenant, or a settlement.²

§ 434. But, although voluntary conveyances and covenous conveyances may thus, although good between the parties, be set aside and held void as to creditors and purchasers, and others, whom they may injure in their rights and interests; yet we are not to understand, that courts of equity grant this relief, and interpose in favor of the latter, under all circumstances. On the contrary, they never do interpose at all, where the property has been conveyed by the voluntary and covenous grantee to a *bond fide* purchaser for a valuable consideration without notice. Such a person is a favorite in the eyes of courts of equity, and is always protected (as has been already intimated) against claims of this sort.³ Indeed, in every just sense, his equity is equal to that of any other person, whether he be a creditor, or a purchaser of the grantor; and where the equity is equal, we have seen that the

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4. § 25, and note (c); id. B. 1, ch. 5, § 2; Atherley on Marr. Sett. ch. 3, p. 131 to 139; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, ch. 1, § 7, and note (v); Ellis v. Nimmo, Lloyd & Goold, 348. But see *contra*, Holloway v. Headington, 8 Simons, 325, and Jefferys v. Jefferys, 1 Craig & Phillips, 138, 140; in both which cases Ellis v. Nimmo seems shaken, if not entirely overthrown. And see Moore v. Crofton, 3 Jones & Lat. 438. See *ante*, § 95, 169; *post*, § 706, 706 a, 787 a, 973 b, 793, 987, 1040 b.

² Lord Cottenham, in Jefferys v. Jefferys, 1 Craig & Phillips, 138, 141; s. r. Holloway v. Headington, 8 Simons, 325. See also *post*, § 706, 706 a, 787, 793 b, 973, 987; Tuffnell v. Constable, 8 Sim. 69; Meek v. Kettlewell, before Lord Lyndhurst in the (English) Jurist, 23 Dec. 1843, p. 1121.

³ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 I. 3, 4, I. 11, 4 W. 29; *ante*, § 381; Atherley on Marr. Sett. ch. 5, p. 128; ch. 14, p. 238; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 3, § 1, and notes; id. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2; Com. Dig. Covin, B. 3, 4; Chancery, 4 I. 3, 4 I. 4, 4 W. 29; Sugden on Vendors, ch. 16, § 10; Prodggers v. Langham, 1 Sid. 123; Parr v. Eliason, 1 East, 92, 95; Sterry v. Arden, 1 Johns. Ch. 261, 271; s. c. 12 Johns. 536; Roberts v. Anderson, 3 Johns. Ch. 377, 378; s. c. 18 Johns. 513; Bean v. Smith, 2 Mason, 278, 279, 280; Gore v. Brazier, 3 Mass. 641; State of Connecticut v. Bradish, 14 Mass. 296; Trull v. Bigelow, 16 Mass. 406; *ante*, § 64 c, 108, 139, 381, 409.

rule applies, *potior est conditio possidentis*.¹ And, where there is a *bona fide* purchaser from the voluntary or fraudulent grantor, and another from the voluntary or fraudulent grantee, the grantees will have preference, according to the priority of their respective titles.²

[§ 434 *a*. So, another qualification or exception to the general doctrine concerning the statute 27 Eliz. ch. 4, has lately been laid down; viz., that in order that a subsequent conveyance to purchasers for value should have the effect to defeat a prior voluntary conveyance, it is essential that both conveyances should be made by one and the same person. Therefore, where a voluntary conveyance had been made by an ancestor in his lifetime, and afterwards his devisee conveyed the same property to a *bona fide* purchaser for value, it was held that the first conveyance was not fraudulent and void, under the statute 27 Eliz. ch. 4, as against the subsequent purchaser. And the court said the principle upon which voluntary conveyances had been held fraudulent and void as against subsequent purchasers for value was, that by the second sale the vendor so entirely repudiated the former conveyance, as that, against himself and the purchaser for value, it should be conclusively taken, that the intention to sell existed when he made the voluntary conveyance, and that it was made in order to defeat the subsequent purchaser. And that this principle did not apply where the grantor in the second conveyance was a different person from him who made the voluntary conveyance, for the acts of one man could not show the mind and intention of another.³]

§ 435. The civil law proceeded upon the same enlightened policy. In the case of alienations of movables and immovables, *bona fide* purchasers for a valuable consideration, having no knowledge

¹ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, § 1; id. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2; 1 Fonbl. B. 1, ch. 4, § 25; Fletcher v. Peck, 6 Cranch, 87, 133; *ante*, § 298.

² Anderson v. Roberts, 18 Johns. 513; s. c. 3 Johns. Ch. 377, 378; Sands v. Hildreth, 14 Johns. 498. But see Preston v. Crofut, 1 Connect. 527, note; Sugden on Vendors, ch. 16, § 10; Doe d. Newman v. Rusham, 9 Eng. Law & Eq. 417.

³ Doe d. Newman v. Rusham, 9 Eng. Law & Eq. 410, overruling Jones v. Whittaker, 1 Longf. & Towns, Ir. 14. On the other hand, it has been held in America, that a purchaser for value of the administrator of a person who had made a voluntary conveyance, might avoid the former deed as a subsequent purchaser under 27 Eliz. ch. 4; Clapp v. Leatherbee, 18 Pick. 131.

of any fraudulent intent of the grantor or debtor, were protected. "Ait prætor; Quæ fraudationis causa gesta erunt, cum eo, qui fraudem non ignoraverit, actionem dabo."¹ Upon this, there follows this comment. "Hoc Edictum eum coërcet, qui sciens eum in fraudem creditorum hoc facere, suscepit, quod in fraudem creditorum fiebat. Quare, si quid in fraudem creditorum factum sit, si tamen is, qui cepit, ignoravit, cessare videntur verba Edicti."² And the very case is afterwards put, of a *bonâ fide* purchaser from a fraudulent grantee, the validity of whose purchase is unequivocally affirmed. "Is, qui a debitore, cujus bona possessa sunt, sciens rem emit, iterum alii bonâ fide ementi vendidit; quæsitum sit, an secundus emptor conveneri potest? Sed verior est Sabini sententia, bonâ fide emptorem non teneri; quia dolus ei duntaxat nocere debeat, qui eum admisit; quemadmodum diximus, non teneri eum, si ab ipso debitore ignorans emerit. Is autem, qui dolo malo emit, bonâ fide autem ementi vendidit, in solidum pretium rei, quod accepit, tenebitur."³ The same doctrine is fully recognized by Voet.⁴ And its intrinsic justice is so persuasive and satisfactory, that, whether derived from Roman sources or not, it would have been truly surprising not to have found it embodied in the jurisprudence of England.⁵

§ 436. Indeed, the principle is more broad and comprehensive; and, although not absolutely universal (for we have seen that there are anomalies in the case of judgment creditors, and the case of dower);⁶ yet it is generally true, and applies to cases of every sort, where an equity is sought to be enforced against a *bonâ fide* purchaser of the legal estate without notice, or even against a *bonâ fide* purchaser, not having the legal estate, where he has a better right or title to call for the legal estate than the other

¹ Dig. Lib. 42, tit. 8, l. 1.

² Dig. Lib. 42, tit. 8, l. 6, § 8; 1 Domat. B. 2, tit. 10, § 1, art. 3.

³ Dig. Lib. 42, tit. 8, l. 9; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 42, tit. 8, art. 3, § 25.

⁴ 2 Voet, Comm. Lib. 42, tit. 8, § 10, p. 195.

⁵ *Wilson v. Worrall's case*, Godb. 161; *Bean v. Smith*, 2 Mason, 279 to 281; *Anderson v. Roberts*, 18 Johns. 513.

⁶ See *ante*, § 57 *a*, 108, 381, 410, note; *post*, § 630, 631; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note, p. 22; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2, notes (*A*) and (*i*); *id.* B. 3, ch. 3, § 1, note (*a*); *id.* B. 6, ch. 3, § 3, note (*i*); 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7, note (*u*); *id.* B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*), p. 22; *id.* B. 1, ch. 5, § 4; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 2, ch. 3, p. 283; *Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 274, note (*d*).

party.¹ It applies, therefore, to cases of accident and mistake, as well as to cases of fraud, which, however remediable between the original parties, are not relievable, as against such purchasers, under such circumstances.²

§ 437. We have thus gone over the principal grounds upon which courts of equity grant relief in matters of accident, mistake, and fraud. In all these cases (to recur to a train of remark already suggested), it may be truly asserted, that the remedy and relief administered in courts of equity are, in general, more complete, adequate, and perfect, than they can be at common law. The remedy is more complete, adequate, and perfect, because equity uses instruments and proofs not accessible at law; such as an injunction, operating to prevent future injustice, and a bill of discovery, addressing itself to the conscience of the party in matters of proof. The relief, also, is more complete, adequate, and perfect, inasmuch as it adapts itself to the special circumstances of each particular case; adjusting all cross equities; and bringing all the parties in interest before the court, so as to prevent multiplicity of suits and interminable litigation.³ Courts of law, on the other hand, cannot do more than pronounce a positive judgment in a set formulary, for the plaintiff or for the defendant, without professing or attempting to qualify that judgment, according to the relative equities of the parties. Thus, if a deed is fraudulently obtained without consideration, or for an adequate consideration; or, if by fraud, accident, or mistake, a deed is framed contrary to the intention of the parties in their contract on the subject; the forms of proceeding in the courts of common law will not admit of such an investigation of the matter in those courts, as will enable them to do justice. The parties claiming under the deed have, therefore, an advantage in proceeding in a court of common law, which it is against conscience they should use. Courts of equity will (as we have seen), on this very ground, interfere to restrain pro-

¹ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2, note (h); 1 Fonbl. B. 7, ch. 4, § 25, and note (e); id. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7; Sugden on Vendors, ch. 16; 2 Chance on Powers, ch. 23, § 1, art. 2859 to 2863; *Pomfret v. Windsor*, 2 Ves. 472, 486; *Medlicott v. O'Donel*, 1 B. & Beatt. 171; *Ex parte Knott*, 11 Ves. 618; *Brace v. Duchess of Marlborough*, 2 P. Will. 495; *ante*, § 64 c, 108, 139, 381, 409, 411; *post*, § 434, 436.

² *Ante*, § 64 c, 108, 381, 409, 410, 434; *post*, § 630, 631.

³ See *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, p. 111, 112, 113.

ceedings at law, until the matter has been properly investigated. And, if it finally appears that the deed has been improperly obtained; or that it is contrary to the intention of the parties in their contract; these courts will, in the first case, compel a delivery and cancellation of the deed; or order it to be deposited with an officer of the court; and will farther direct a reconveyance of the property, if it has been so conveyed that a reconveyance may be necessary. In the second case, they will either rectify the deed according to the intention of the parties; or they will restrain the use of it in the points in which it has been framed contrary to, or it has gone beyond their intention in the original contract.¹

§ 438. In like manner, courts of equity will (as we have seen) aid defective securities under like circumstances. They will also interfere, not only to relieve against instruments which create rights, but against those which destroy rights; such as a release fraudulently or improperly obtained.² And, finally, they will not only prevent the unfair use of any advantage in proceeding in a court of ordinary jurisdiction, gained by fraud, accident, or mistake, but they will also, if the consequences of the advantage have been actually obtained, restore the injured party to his rights.³

§ 439. The flexibility of courts of equity, too, in adapting their decrees to the actual relief required by the parties, in which their proceedings form so marked a contrast to the proceedings at the common law, is illustrated in a striking manner, in cases of accident, mistake, and fraud. If a decree were in all cases required to be given in a prescribed form, the remedial justice would necessarily be very imperfect, and often wholly beside the real merits of the case. Accident, mistake, and fraud are of an infinite variety in form, character, and circumstances, and are incapable of being adjusted by any single and uniform rule. Of each of them one might say, "*Mille trahit varios adverso sole colores.*" The beautiful character, pervading excellence, if one may so say, of equity jurisprudence is, that it varies its adjustments and proportions, so as to meet the very form and pressure of each particular case in all its complex habitudes. Thus, to present a summary of what has been already stated, if conveyances or other instruments are fraudulently or improperly obtained, they are decreed to be given

¹ *Mif. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 128, 129; *id.* 112, 113.

² *Ibid.* 129, 130.

³ *Ibid.* 131.

up and cancelled.¹ If they are money securities, on which the money has been paid, the money is decreed to be paid back. If they are deeds, or other muniments of title, detained from the rightful party, they are decreed to be delivered up.² If they are deeds depressed or spoliated, the party is decreed to hold the same rights as if they were in his possession and power.³ If there has been any undue concealment, or misrepresentation, or specific promise collusively broken, the injured party is placed in the same situation, and the other party is compelled to do the same acts, as if all had been transacted with the utmost good faith.⁴ If the party says nothing, but by his expressive silence misleads another to his injury, he is compellable to make good the loss; and his own title, if the case requires it, is made subservient to that of the confiding purchaser.⁵ If a party, by fraud or misrepresentation, induces another to do an act injurious to a third person, he is made responsible for it.⁶ If, by fraud or misrepresentation he prevents acts from being done, equity treats the case, as to him, as if it were done; and makes him a trustee for the other.⁷ If a will is revoked by a fraudulent deed, the revocation is treated as a nullity.⁸ If a devisee obtains a devise by fraud, he is treated as a trustee of the injured parties.⁹ In all these, and many other cases which might be mentioned, courts of equity undo what has been done, if wrong; and do what has been left undone, if right.

§ 440. We may conclude this head, by calling the attention of the reader to the remark (which has been necessarily introduced in another place), that courts of equity will exercise a concurrent jurisdiction with courts of law in all matters of fraud, excepting only of fraud in obtaining a will, which, if of real estate, is con-

¹ See 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 208, 211, 212, 261; Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 127, 128, 132.

² Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 124.

³ Mitf. Eq. Pl. 117, 118; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 1, 385, &c.; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 211, 258.

⁴ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 209, 210; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 4, and notes.

⁵ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 211; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 4, and notes (m) and (n).

⁶ 3 P. Will. 131, note; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, ch. 2, § 1, p. 388, 389.

⁷ Mad. Pr. Ch. 552; 1 Jac. & Walk. 96; 11 Ves. 638.

⁸ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (f), p. 13; id. B. 1, ch. 2, § 13, note, (q). But see Ambler, 215; 3 Bro. Ch. 156, note; 7 Ves. 373, 374.

⁹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (f), p. 13; 2 Fonbl. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 3, and note (g); Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy. 257.

stantly referred to a court of law to decide it, in the shape of an issue of *devisavit vel non*;¹ and which, if of personal estate, is, in England, cognizable in the spiritual or ecclesiastical courts.² But, even in this case the bill may be retained, to abide the decision in the proper court, and relief be decreed according to the event.³ No other excepted case is known to exist; and it is not easy to discern the grounds upon which this exception stands, in point of reason or principle, although it is clearly settled by authority.⁴ But where the fraud does not go to the whole will, but only to some particular clause; or where the fraud is in unduly obtaining the consent of the next of kin to the probate, courts of equity will lay hold of these circumstances to declare the executor a trustee for the next of kin.⁵

[* § 440 a. As there are many schemes now set on foot to dispose of alleged mineral treasures, represented to lie buried in otherwise valueless lands, by means of joint-stock companies set on foot for the purpose of purchasing such lands at a price far above their known value, and this kept secret as to the shareholders and a majority of the directors often; it may be useful to state a recent decision by the present Lord-Chancellor Hatherly, as Vice-Chancellor Wood;⁶ the defendant held a lease of the lands alleged to have mineral lead upon them, but which he seemed to have known

¹ See *Gould v. Gould*, 3 Story, 537.

² *Ante*, § 184, 238; *Allen v. Macpherson*, 5 Beav. 469; s. c. on Appeal, 1 Phillips, Ch. 133.

³ See *ante*, § 184, note; and *Gaines & Wife v. Chew*, 2 Howard, Sup. Ct. 619, 645.

⁴ *Ante*, § 184, 238, 252, 254; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*), p. 13; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 3, and note (*e*); *Kerrick v. Bransby*, 3 Brown, Parl. Cas. 358; 7 Bro. Parl. Cas. by Tomlins, p. 437. See *Wild v. Hobson*, 2 Ves. & B. 108; Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 257; *Barnesley v. Powell*, 1 Ves. 284; *id.* 119; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 206; *Jones v. Jones*, 7 Price, 663; *Allen v. Macpherson*, 1 Phill. Ch. 133.

⁵ Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 257; *Barnesley v. Powell*, 1 Ves. 284; *Tucker v. Phipps*, 3 Atk. 360; *Allen v. Macpherson*, 1 Phill. Ch. 133. In this last case many of the former decisions are collected in which courts of equity have granted relief in cases of fraud in wills. See the opinion cited at large, *ante*, § 184, note; and also the other authorities cited in the same note.

⁶ *Atwool v. Merryweather*, Law Rep. 5 Eq. 464. The question how far acquiescence in any such fraud will preclude redress, and what amounts to such acquiescence, was considered by the same learned judge in *Clinch v. Financial Corporation*, Law Rep. 5 Eq. 450.

to be of small value. In order to dispose of the lease for twenty-one years at £4,000, the company was formed by an accomplice for the purchase of the lands or the lease at £7,000, he to retain £3,000 for his services in forming the company, and the defendant to receive £4,000 for the lease and a certificate of 600 paid-up shares in the company at £5 each, making £3,000 more. The capital stock of the company was fixed at £30,000, £3,940 of which had been paid by the subscribers and gone into the defendant's hands when the fraud was discovered; all the directors except the defendant and his one accomplice supposing that the *bond fide* price of the land was £7,000, and that the defendant paid for his shares. The court set aside the contract, and decreed the defendant to restore the money received by him, and to surrender his certificate of shares.

§ 440 *b*. The subject of shareholders in joint-stock companies being bound to contribute to the payment of debts of the company by reason of allowing their names to remain upon the list of shareholders, notwithstanding they may have been induced in the first instance to take shares in the company by the fraudulent misrepresentations of the company, has been largely discussed in the English courts within the last few years; and the rule seems to be now firmly established in the House of Lords.¹ The general principles involved are thus stated in the House of Lords. Where a person has been by the fraudulent misrepresentation of directors, or their fraudulent concealment of facts, drawn into a contract to purchase shares in a company, the directors cannot enforce the contract against him, but he may rescind it. But he must do so within a reasonable time. A contract induced by fraud is not void but voidable, and therefore although the persons who induced the same by fraud may not enforce it; other persons may in consequence of it acquire interests and rights, which they may enforce against the party so drawn into the contract.

¹ *Oakes v. Turquand*, Law Rep. 2 H. L. 325; s. c. Law Rep. 3 Eq. 576; s. p. *Henderson v. The Royal British Bank*, 7 E. & B. 356. Upon the general question of the jurisdiction in courts of equity to set aside conveyances made in fraud of the rights of others and award damages for injuries already incurred or likely hereafter to ensue, see *Dodd v. Cook*, 11 Gray, 495; *Whitemore v. Corvell*, 7 Allen, 446. But such courts will not interfere to set aside a conveyance which is not capable of doing injury to the plaintiff although made with that purpose. *Johnson v. Crane*, 40 Barb. 78. Nor will the court interfere, where the defect seems merely formal, and one which may be cured by presumption or construction. *Ludlow v. Van Ness*, 8 Beav. 178.

§ 440 c. The rule of law that persons co-operating in an illegal transaction will not obtain the aid of a court of equity applies to the mode of relief by setting aside conveyances fraudulently executed or obtained.¹ But where the parties to the conveyance, do not stand upon an equal footing, the grantor being in an infirm state of mind, and not competent to conduct his business affairs with ordinary skill and sagacity, and the grantee was his son-in-law and confidential friend and legal adviser, and the grantor acted on the advice of the grantee, it was held the parties were not so far in *pari delicto*, or upon equal grounds, as to preclude the relief sought by the grantor in compelling the grantee to reconvey the land in pursuance of an oral agreement, notwithstanding the purpose of the grantor in making the conveyance was to place the premises for the time out of the reach of his creditors, and was unquestionably fraudulent as to them.² But a court of equity will not set aside a mortgage upon the ground that the plaintiff was induced to execute it through the fraudulent representation of the defendant that he would not enforce it;² nor upon the ground of misrepresentation, as to the legal effect of the instrument.³

§ 440 d. One who appeals to a court of equity to declare an absolute deed to operate merely as a mortgage must allege and prove that the clause of redemption was omitted by reason of ignorance, fraud, mistake, or undue advantage taken by the grantee against the grantor. The allegation that the grantor executed the deed, without condition, "but intended it simply as a mortgage as will more fully appear by the proofs," will not be sufficient ground for relief. Nor is the allegation that the grantee agreed to make a defeasance at a subsequent day sufficient.⁴]

¹ *Stewart v. Ackley*, 52 Barb. 283, where the grounds of this rule of law are extensively discussed and placed in a very clear light.

² *Freelove v. Cole*, 41 Barb. 318. See also as to the disposition of courts of equity to set aside contracts, where the parties stand in unequal relations, as to capacity and an unconscionable advantage has been taken of the weaker party, and allow securities so taken to stand only for the amount actually advanced. See *Futrill v. Futrill*, 6 Jones, Eq. 337; *Garrow v. Brown*, 1 Winst. Eq. 46.

³ *Catlin v. Fletcher*, 9 Min. 85. See also *Fish v. Cleland*, 33 Ill. 238.

⁴ *Briant v. Corpening*, Phillips, Eq. 325.

CHAPTER VIII.

ACCOUNT.

- [* § 441. Subjects treated.
- § 442-449. The mode of proceeding in the action of account at common law.
- § 450-452. Grounds of jurisdiction, and manner of proceeding, in equity.
- § 453-458 *a.* The grounds of equity jurisdiction, in account, stated.
- § 459. It extends to all matters of account, unless it be a single item on one side, and mere set-offs on the other, with no claim for a discovery.
- § 459 *a.* General rule of appropriation of payments is to earliest items of account.
- § 459 *b.* In the absence of appropriation by the parties, equity consults justice and the presumed intention of the parties.
- § 459 *c.*, 459 *d.* The rule of the civil law, the presumed intention of debtor.
- § 459 *e.*, 459 *f.* Two accounts blended, credits go to oldest account.
- § 459 *g.* If debtor omit to appropriate, creditor has the election.
- § 460, 461. General remarks.
- § 462. Agency, special kinds of agency.
- § 462, 463. Jurisdiction rests in confidence and trust.
- § 462 *a.*, 462 *b.* Right of principal to have account, in equity, against agent.
- § 464. But equity will not take jurisdiction of a single transaction, unless for discovery.
- § 465. Subject illustrated by the case of trustee and *cestui que trust.*
- § 466. Other instances of fiduciary relations requiring account.
- § 466 *a.* Trustees or directors of private corporations, not allowed to make profits for themselves.
- § 467. Courts of equity hold one's estate liable for virtual torts.
- § 468, 468 *a.* Agent not allowed to gain advantage by confused accounts, confusion of property, or fraud.
- § 469. Apportionment, Contribution, and General Average, grounds of equity jurisdiction.
- § 470. Definition and application of Apportionment.
- § 471, 471 *a.* Entire contracts not apportionable, at law.
- § 472-474. Subject illustrated, in equity, by apprentice fees.
- § 475, 476. Apportionment of rent sometimes allowed.
- § 477, 478. Apportionment of common burdens on land, more convenient in equity.
- § 479-482. Illustrations of the doctrine.
- § 483-486. Application of the doctrine to burdens on real estate.
- § 487. Those having different estates pay according to their respective interests.
- § 488. So also as to the interest payable upon such encumbrances.
- § 488 *a.* The price of an estate sold is apportioned in the same mode.
- § 489. Courts of equity have the proper jurisdiction of these matters.
- § 490. Definition of General Average.
- § 491. Reasons why courts of equity have jurisdiction in such cases.
- § 491 *a.* Foreign equity courts have jurisdiction.
- § 492. Contribution among sureties.

- § 498. This is founded upon moral duty and general equity.
- § 494. The rule of the civil law stated.
- § 495. Sureties liable to contribution, whether bound by the same or by different contracts.
- § 496-497 a. Courts of equity afford the more perfect remedy, but similar in amount to that of courts of law.
- § 498. The relative burdens varied by contract, express or implied.
- § 498 a, 498 b. The creditor, by releasing one surety, releases all.
- § 498 c, 502 b. Where the surety assumes the debt, he is not released by the release of the principal.
- § 499. Surety entitled to benefit of collateral remedies. So also the creditor.
- § 499 a. It is claimed, the surety may treat the bail of the principal as principal.
- § 499 b, 499 c. The surety cannot claim an assignment of paid securities.
- § 499 d. Surety on bond, on payment, is not a specialty creditor, but is entitled to vendor's lien.
- § 500. Subrogation of surety to rights of creditor obtained in civil law.
- § 501. Creditor must there hold himself ready and capable of cession to the surety.
- § 502. Creditor may claim the benefit of securities held by surety.
- § 502 a. Creditor not compellable to part with securities, till paid all his claims against principal.
- § 503. Legatees compellable to refund, when paid, before creditors.
- § 504. Contribution among partners.
- § 505. Contribution among joint-tenants and tenants in common.
- § 506. Liens as the basis of an account.
- § 506 a-508. Insurance, rents, and profits, as matters of account.
- § 509. Equity takes account of mesne profits, in its discretion.
- § 510, 511. Will compel creditors, &c., to account for mesne profits.
- § 512. Other instances of such account.
- § 513. Equity will compel the payment of mesne profits, after the death of the tenant.
- § 514. Discovery, and the prevention of fraud, will support the jurisdiction.
- § 514 a. Wrongful intruder is held to more strict account.
- § 515, 516. Equity will compel an account of waste.
- § 515 a. Account of minerals in equity.
- § 517. Jurisdiction based on want of discovery, and of injunction.
- § 518. Or, as some of the cases hold, to prevent multiplicity of suits.
- § 518 a, 518 b. Liability of tenant for life, for cutting timber.
- § 519, 520. Equity will decree account of tithes, or a modus.
- § 521, 522. Both parties are actors, in account.
- § 523. A stated account may be plead in bar, unless objectionable.
- § 524, 525, 527. Leave to surcharge and falsify. Party defendant must impeach debit, or show omission of credit.
- § 526, 528. Stated account, by express agreement, or acquiescence.
- § 527 a. Stated account set aside, where parties in unequal relation.
- § 529. Courts of equity do not entertain suits barred by statute of limitations, or by lapse of time.]

§ 441. HAVING disposed of these three great heads of concurrent equitable jurisdiction in matters of accident, mistake, and fraud, the undisputed possession of which has belonged to courts of equity from the earliest period, which can be traced out in our judicial

annals, we may now pass to others of a different and less extensive character. We allude to the heads, where the jurisdiction, although it may attach upon any or all of the grounds above mentioned, is not necessarily dependent upon them, and, in fact, is exercised in a variety of cases where they do not apply, upon another distinct ground; namely, that the subject-matter is, *per se*, within the scope of equitable jurisdiction. Among these are matters of account, and, as incident thereto, matters of apportionment, contribution, and average; liens, rents, and profits; tithes, and moduses; waste; matters of administration, legacies, and marshalling of assets; confusion of boundaries; matters of dower; marshalling of securities; matters of partition; matters of partnership; and, lastly, matters of rent, so far as they are not embraced in the preceding head of Account.

§ 442. Let us begin with matters of ACCOUNT. One of the most ancient forms of action at the common law is the action of account. But the modes of proceeding in that action, although aided from time to time by statutable provisions, were found so very dilatory, inconvenient, and unsatisfactory, that as soon as courts of equity began to assume jurisdiction in matters of account, as they did at a very early period, the remedy at law began to decline; and, although some efforts have been made in modern times to resuscitate it, it has in England fallen into almost total disuse.¹ Courts of equity have for a long time exercised a general jurisdiction in all cases of mutual accounts, upon the ground of the inadequacy of the remedy at law; and have extended the remedy to a vast variety of cases (such as to implied and constructive trusts) to which the remedy at law never was applied.² So that now the jurisdiction extends, not only to cases of an equitable nature, but to many

¹ In *Godfrey v. Saunders* (3 Wilson, 73, 113, 117), which is one of the few modern actions of account in England, Lord Chief Justice Wilmot said (p. 117), "I am glad to see this action of account is revived in this court." Mr. Gwillim, in his edition of *Bac. Abridg.* title, *Accompt*, p. 31, note (a), seemed to think, that the action of account did not deserve the character usually given of it. But the parliamentary commissioners, in their second report on the common law, 8th March, 1830 (p. 9, 25, 26), have no scruple to admit its inconvenience and dilatoriness, and that it has gone into disuse. See also Buller, N. P. 217; 2 Reeves, *Hist. of the Law*, 73, 178, 337; 3 Reeves, *Hist. L.* 388; 4 Reeves, *Hist. L.* 378; *Crousillat v. McCall*, 5 Binn. 433; 3 Black. Comm. 164.

² See *Corporation of Carlisle v. Wilson*, 13 Ves. 275; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (f), p. 13, 14; *Bac. Abridg. Accompt*, B.

cases where the form of the account is purely legal, and the items, constituting the account, are founded on obligations purely legal. Upon such legal obligations, however, suits, although not in the form of actions of account, yet in the form of assumpsit, covenant, and debt, are still daily prosecuted in the courts of common law,¹ and legal defences are there brought forward. But even in these cases, as the courts possess no authority to stop the ordinary progress of such suits, for the purpose of subjecting the matters in dispute to the investigation of a more convenient tribunal than a jury, unless the parties agree to a voluntary arrangement for this purpose, the cause often proceeds to trial in a manner wholly unsuitable to its real merits.²

[* 442 a. As courts of equity entertain concurrent jurisdiction to the fullest extent, with courts of law, in matters of account, the decision as to the proper tribunal must be governed by considerations of convenience.³ A demurrer to a bill seeking an account of goods sold by defendant, on which the plaintiff was entitled to a commission, was here overruled, with costs.⁴ But where the bill contained no allegation of any complexity in the accounts, or any mutuality, so that it was mere matter of ordinary contract, it was not entertained.⁵ The court will not, in the absence of fraud, or special circumstances, investigate an ordinary account, between a builder and his employer.⁶ The court will endeavor to assume

¹ It was at one time doubted, whether an action of assumpsit would lie for the balance of an account, where there are items on both sides. But it is now fully established that, however numerous the items may be, still, if there appears any thing due on one side, an action of assumpsit will lie for the balance. *Tomkins v. Willshear*, 5 Taunt. 431; s. c. 1 Marsh. 115, and the cases there cited; 2 Saund. 127, Williams's note (*d*). The use of the old action of account is there said to be, where the plaintiff wants an account, and cannot give evidence of his right without it. *Ib*.

² 2 Parl. Common Law Rep. 1830, p. 25, 26; *Wilkin v. Wilkin*, Salk. 9; 3 Black. Comm. 184. The Parliamentary Commissioners, in their Second Report on the Common Law (8th March, 1830, p. 26), proposed to invest the courts of common law with power to refer such accounts to auditors in such cases; a suggestion, which has since been adopted; as indeed, it had been adopted before in some of the American States. See *Duncan v. Lyons*, 3 Johns. Ch. 361; Act of Massachusetts, 20th Feb. 1818, ch. 142.

³ [* *Shepard v. Brown*, 4 Giff. 208.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Smith v. Leveaux*, 9 Law T. N. s. 313; 1 H. & M. 123; *post*, § 462 a; s. c. 2 De G., J. & S. 1.

⁶ *Flockton v. Peake*, 12 W. R. 562.

jurisdiction in matters of account, where doing so will promote substantial justice between the parties.^{1]}

§ 443. The difficulties in the modes of proceeding in actions of account, and the convenience of the modes of proceeding in suits in equity, to attain the ends of substantial justice, are stated in an elementary work of solid reputation, with great clearness and force. The language of the learned author is as follows: "The proceedings in this action being difficult, dilatory, and expensive, it is now seldom used, especially if the party have other remedy, as debt, covenant, case; or if the demand be of consequence, and the matter of an intricate nature; for, in such case, it is more advisable to resort to a court of equity, where matters of account are more commodiously adjusted, and determined more advantageously for both parties; the plaintiff being entitled to a discovery of books, papers, and the defendant's oath; and, on the other hand, the defendant being allowed to discount the sums paid or expended by him; to discharge himself of sums under forty shillings by his own oath; and if by answer or other writing he charges himself, by the same to discharge himself, which will be good, if there be no other evidence. Farther, all reasonable allowances are made to him; and if after the account is stated, any thing be due to him upon the balance, he is entitled to a decree in his favor."²

§ 444. To expound and justify the truth of these remarks, it may be well to take a short review of the old action of account, and to see to what narrow boundaries it was confined, and by what embarrassments it was surrounded.

§ 445. At the common law, an action of account lay only in cases where there was either a privity in deed, by the consent of the party, as against a bailiff or receiver appointed by the party, or a privity in law, *ex provisione legis*, as against a guardian in socage.³ An exception, indeed, or rather an extension of the rule, was, for the benefit of trade and the advancement of commerce, allowed in favor of and between merchants; and therefore, by the

¹ *Dabbs v. Nugent*, 11 Jur. n. s. 943; s. c. 14 W. R. 94.]

² Bac. Abridg. *Accompt.* See, also, 1 Eq. Abridg. p. 5, note (a); Anon., 1 Vern. 283; *Whicherly v. Whicherly*, 1 Vern. 470; *Marshfield v. Weston*, 2 Vern. 176.

³ 1 Co. Litt. 90 b; id. 172 a; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 7, § 6, and note; Bac. Abridg. *Accompt.*, A; Com. Dig. *Accompt.*, A. 1; 2 Inst. 379.

law-merchant, one naming himself a merchant might have an account against another, naming him a merchant, and charge him as receiver.¹ But, in truth, in almost every supposable case of this sort, there was an established privity of contract. With this exception, however (if such it be), the action was strictly confined to bailiffs, receivers, and guardians in socage.² So strictly was this privity of contract construed, that the action did not lie by or against executors and administrators. The statute of 13th of Edward III. ch. 23, gave it to the executors of a merchant; the statute of 25th of Edward III. ch. 5, gave it to the executors of executors; and the statute of 31st of Edward III. ch. 11, to administrators.³ But it was not until the statute of 3d and 4th of Anne, ch. 16, that it lay against executors and administrators of guardians, bailiffs, and receivers.⁴

§ 446. But in all cases of this latter sort, although there was no remedy at the common law, yet a bill in equity might be maintained for an account against the personal representatives of guardians, bailiffs, and receivers; and such was the usual remedy prior to the remedial statute of Anne.⁵ And no action of account lay at the common law against wrong-doers;⁶ or by one joint-tenant, or tenant in common, or his executors or administrators, against the other, as bailiff, for receiving more than his share; or against his executors or administrators, unless there was some special contract between them, whereby the one made the other his bailiff; for the relation itself was held not to create any privity of contract by operation of law.⁷ This defect was afterwards cured by the statute of the 3d and 4th of Anne, ch. 16.⁸ The common law

¹ Co. Litt. 172 a; Earl of Devonshire's case, 11 Co. 89.

² Buller, N. P. 127; 1 Eq. Abridg. 5, note (a); 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 7, § 6, and note (n); Co. Litt. 172 a; 2 Inst. 379; Sargent v. Parsons, 12 Mass. 149.

³ Co. Litt. 90 b; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 7, § 6, and note (n).

⁴ Ibid.; Buller, N. P. 127; Earl of Devonshire's case, 11 Co. 89.

⁵ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 7, § 6, note (n); 1 Eq. Abridg. 5, note (a).

⁶ Bac. Abridg. *Accompt*, B. We shall presently see that courts of equity frequently administer relief in cases of account against wrong-doers. See Bac. Abridg. *Accompt*, B; Bosanquet v. Dashwood, Cas. T. Talb, 38, 41.

⁷ Co. Litt. 172, and Harg. note (8); Co. Litt. 186 a, 119 b, and Harg. note (83); Wheeler v. Horne, Willes, 208; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 7, § 6, note (n); Bac. Abridg. *Accompt*, A; 1 Saund. 216, Williams's note.

⁸ Ibid.; 3 Black. Comm.

was strict, as to who was to be accounted a bailiff or receiver; for a bailiff was understood to be one who had the administration and charge of lands, goods, and chattels, to make the best benefit for the owner, and against whom, therefore, an action of account would lie for the profits, which he had made, or might, by his industry or care, have reasonably made: his reasonable charges and expenses being deducted.¹ A receiver was one who received money to the use of another to render an account; but upon his account he was not allowed his expenses and charges, except in the case of merchant receivers. And this exception was provided (as it was said) by the law of the land in favor of merchants, and for the advancement of trade and traffic.² So that it will be at once perceived from these cases (and many others might be mentioned)³ that the remedy at the common law was very narrow; and although it was afterwards enlarged, that would not of itself displace the jurisdiction originally vested in courts of equity.

§ 446 *a*. In the next place, as to the modes of proceeding in actions of account. At the common law, before either the statute of Marlebridge, ch. 23, or of Westminster 2d, ch. 11, there were two methods of proceedings against an accountant; one, by which the party, to whom he was accountable, might, by consent of the accountant, either take the account himself, or assign an auditor or auditors to take it; and then have his action of debt for the arrearages; or, in more modern times, an action on the case, or *insimul computassent*. And the accountant, if aggrieved, might have his writ of *ex parte talis*, to re-examine the account in the exchequer. The other proceeding of the plaintiff was in the first instance, by way of a writ of account. The process, by which this latter remedy might be made more effectual, is particularly described in the statute of Marlebridge, and the statute of Westminster 2d, upon which it is unnecessary to dwell.⁴

§ 447. In the action of account, there are two distinct courses of proceeding. In the first place, the party may interpose any matter in abatement or bar of the proceeding; and if he fails in

¹ Co. Litt. 172 *a*; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 7, § 6, and note (*n*).

² Co. Litt. 172 *a*.

³ See Bac. Abridg. *Accompt*, B, C; Com. Dig. *Accompt*, A, B, D; 3 Reeves, Hist. L. 337, 338, 339; 3 Reeves, Hist. L. 75; 4 Reeves, Hist. L. 75, 76.

⁴ Com. Dig. *Accompt*, A, and note (*a*); 3 Reeves, Hist. L. 75, 76.

it, then there is an interlocutory judgment, that he shall account (*quod computet*) before auditors.¹ After this judgment is entered, it is the duty of the court to assign auditors, who are armed with authority to convene the parties before them, *de die in diem*, at any time or place they shall appoint until the accounting is determined. The time by which the account is to be settled is prefixed by the court. But, if the account be of a long or confused nature, the court will, upon the application of the parties, enlarge the time. In taking the account, the auditors in an action of account at the common law could not administer an oath, except in one or two particular cases. But, under the statute of 3d and 4th Anne, ch. 16, the auditors are empowered to administer an oath, and examine the parties touching the matters in question, in cases within that act.²

§ 448. If, in the progress of the cause before the auditors, when the items are successively brought under review, any controversy should arise before the auditors, as to charging or discharging any items, the parties have a right, if the points involve matters of fact, to make up and join issues upon such items respectively; and, if the points involve matters in law, they have a right in like manner to put in and join demurrers upon each distinct item. These issues, when so made up, are to be certified, by the auditors, to the court; and then the matters of law will be decided by the court; and the matters of fact will be directed to be tried by a jury, after which the accounts are to be settled by the auditors according to the results of these trials. From this circumstance the proceedings before the auditors are often tedious, expensive, and inconvenient.³ And, indeed, as different points both of fact and law may arise in different stages of the suit, and in different examinations before the auditors, as well after as before such issues have been joined and tried, it ought not to be surprising, that the cause should be procrastinated for a great length of time, by its transition from one tribunal to another, for the various purposes incident to a due settlement of its merits. And besides these difficulties, there are many

¹ 3 Black. Comm. 164; *O'Conner v. Spaight*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 309.

² Co. Litt. 199, and Harg. note (83); *Wheeler v. Horne*, Willes, 208, 210; 1 Selwyn, N. P. 6; Buller, N. P. 127; Bac. Abridg. *Wager of Law*, C.

³ *Ex parte Bax*, 2 Ves. 388; Bac. Abridg. *Accompt*, F; Buller, N. P. 127, 128; *Crousillat v. McCall*, 5 Binn. 433; Com. Dig. *Accompt*, E. 11; *Yelverton*, 202, Metcalf's note (1).

actions of account in which the defendant may wage his law, and thus escape from answering his adversary's claim.¹

§ 449. This summary view of the modes of proceeding in the action of account is sufficient to show, that it was a very unfit instrument to ascertain and adjust the real merits of long, complicated, and cross accounts. In the first place, it was inapplicable to a vast variety of cases of equitable claims, of constructive trusts, of fraudulent contrivances, and of tortious misconduct.² In the next place, there was a want of due power to draw out the proper proofs from the party's own conscience; so that if evidence *aliunde* was unattainable, there was, and there could be, no effective redress.³ And it has been well observed by Mr. Justice Blackstone, that, notwithstanding all the legislative provisions in aid of the common-law action of account, "it is found by experience, that the most ready and effectual way to settle these matters of account is by a bill in a court of equity, where a discovery may be had on the defendant's oath, without relying merely on the evidence which the plaintiff may be able to produce."⁴

¹ Com. Dig. *Pleader*, 2 W. 45; Co. Litt. 90 b; id. 295 b; 2 Saund. 65 a; Archer's case, Cro. Eliz. 579; Bac. Abridg. *Wager of Law*, D, G.

² See 1 Fonbl. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3 note (*f*), p. 13, 14; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 7, § 67.

³ Mr. Chancellor Kent, in *Duncan v. Lyon* (3 Johns. Ch. 361), said: "I have not been able to find any good reason why that action [account] has so totally fallen into disuse," assigning, as a ground of his remark, that "in that action the auditors have all the requisite powers; for they can compel the parties to account, and be examined under oath." If what is stated in the text be correct, it is manifest that the action of account, as administered in England, cannot be admitted to be an equivalent for a court of equity. It is, perhaps, uncertain, whether the learned Chancellor did not mean to confine his remarks to the actual state of the action in New York. See on this point the opinion of the same learned judge, in *Ludlow v. Simond*, 2 Caines, Cas. Err. 52, 53.

⁴ 3 Black. Comm. 164; *ante*, § 67. Lord Redesdale, in *Attorney General v. Mayor, &c. of Dublin*, 1 Bligh, n. s. 336, 337, gives a summary statement of the old action of account, and of the reasons of its discontinuance. He said: "There has not been in this case a sufficient investigation of the ancient law and practice on the subject of account. It seems to have been conceived, that the common law had provided sufficient means for calling to account all persons liable to account. But it was found by experience, that the writ of account was a very imperfect and inefficient mode of proceeding. In the case of an individual there can be no doubt, that if a person had received the rents of an estate belonging to a minor, for which he would be accountable, the law provided a writ to call such person to account, and to compel payment of what should be found due upon the

§ 450. Courts of equity, in suits of this nature, proceed, in many respects, in analogy to what is done at law. The cause is referred to a Master (acting as an auditor), before whom the account is taken, and he is armed with the fullest powers, not only to examine the parties on oath, but to make all the inquiries by testimony under oath, and by documents and books, and vouchers, to be produced by the parties, which are necessary for the due administration of justice. And when his report is made to the court, any objections which have been made before the master, and any exceptions taken to his report, may be re-examined by the court at the instance of the parties, and the whole case is moulded, as *ex æquo et bono* may be required.¹ The court may, besides, bring all the proper parties in interest before it, where there are different parties concerned in interest; and, if any doubt arises upon any particular demand, it may direct the same to be ascertained by an issue and verdict at law.² So that there cannot be any real doubt that the remedy in equity, in cases of account, is generally more complete and adequate than it is or can be at law.³

§ 451. This has, accordingly, been considered in modern times

account. Yet it is every day's practice, although the common law has provided this remedy, for courts of equity to take upon themselves the investigation of accounts on behalf of infants suing by their next friends. The writ of account at common law did not exclude but rather was superseded by the jurisdiction of the courts of equity on this subject; because the proceeding in equity was found to be the more convenient mode of calling parties to account, — partly on account of the difficulty attending the process under the old writ of account, but chiefly from the advantage of compelling the party to account upon oath, according to the practice of courts of equity. There is, on this subject, a writ in the Register (Reg. Brev. p. 138), which recites that the king had been given to understand that his predecessors had granted certain rates on all merchandise brought into a town, to be applied to the walling of the town; and the inhabitants having complained that the rates collected had not been duly applied, the writ proceeds in the nature of a commission for taking the account. Under such circumstances, an information at this moment would lie at the suit of the attorney general, for taking such account. The practice of proceeding by information rather than by the writ of account has prevailed, in consequence of the difficulty of proceeding under the writ. That persons under such circumstances should be rendered accountable by virtue of the writ, is said to be according to the law and custom of England."

¹ *Ex parte Bax*, 2 Ves. 388.

² 1 Eq. Abridg. A, p. 5, note (a).

³ See Mitford on Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 120; *Corporation of Carlisle v. Wilson*, 13 Ves. 278, 279; *ante*, § 67.

as the true foundation of the jurisdiction.¹ Mr. Justice Blackstone has, indeed, placed it upon the sole ground of the right of the courts of equity, to compel a discovery, — “For want” (said he) “of this discovery at law, the courts of equity have acquired a concurrent jurisdiction with every other court in matters of account.”² But this, although a strong, yet is not the sole ground of the jurisdiction. The whole machinery of courts of equity is better adapted to the purpose of an account in general; and in many cases, independent of the searching power of discovery, and supposing a court of law to possess it, it would be impossible for the latter to do entire justice between the parties; for equitable rights and claims, not cognizable at law, are often involved in the contest.³ Lord Redesdale has justly said, that in a complicated account, a court of law would be incompetent to examine it at *Nisi Prius*, with all the necessary accuracy.⁴ This is the principle on which courts of equity constantly act, by taking cognizance of matters, which, though cognizable at law, are yet so involved with a complex account, that it cannot be properly taken at law; and until the result of the account is known, the justice of the case cannot appear.⁵ Matters of account (he had added) may, indeed, be made the sub-

¹ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 504; Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 120; Ludlow v. Simond, 2 Caines, Cas. Err. 38, 52; Rathbone v. Warren, 10 Johns. 595, 596; Post v. Kimberly, 9 Johns. 493; Duncan v. Lyon, 3 Johns. Ch. 361.

² 3 Black. Comm. 437. See also 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*), p. 12. Mr. Fonblanque, too, seems to consider that the greater portion of the concurrent jurisdiction of courts of equity stands upon a similar ground; for he says, that the courts of equity, having acquired cognizance of the suit, for the purposes of discovery, will entertain it for the purpose of relief, in most cases of Fraud, Account, Accident, and Relief. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*), p. 12. This might justify the jurisdiction; but it does not appear to me to include the whole ground, on which it is maintainable. Mr. Justice Blackstone also traces to the same compulsive power of discovery the jurisdiction of courts of equity in all matters of fraud. 3 Black. Comm. 439. This, as the original or sole ground for the jurisdiction in matters of fraud, admits of still more question.

³ *Ante*, § 67.

⁴ O'Connor v. Spaight, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 309. See White v. Williams, 8 Ves. 193; Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 119, 120.

⁵ O'Connor v. Spaight, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 309; *id.* 205; Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 120; Wilson v. Waterman, 6 Rich. Eq. 266; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 504. [* In Harrington v. Churchward, 6 Jur. n. s. 576; s. c. 8 W. R. 302; it is decided, that where a salary is payable to a servant, in proportion to the profits of his employees, the question whether the servant has a right to

ject of an action ; but an account of this sort is not a proper subject for this mode of proceeding. The old mode of proceeding upon the writ of account shows it. The only judgment was, that the party should account, and then the account was taken by the auditors. The court never went into it.¹

§ 452. It is not improbable, that originally, in cases of account, which might be cognizable at law, courts of equity interfered upon the special ground of accident, mistake, or fraud. If so, the ground was very soon enlarged, and embraced mixed cases, not governed by these matters. The courts soon arrived at the conclusion, that the true principle, upon which they should entertain suits for an account, in matters cognizable at law, was, that either a court of law could not give any remedy at all, or not so complete a remedy as courts of equity. And the moment this principle was adopted in its just extent, the concurrent jurisdiction became almost universal, and reached almost instantaneously its present boundaries.²

§ 453. In virtue of this general jurisdiction in matters of account, courts of equity exercise a very ample authority over matters apparently not very closely connected with it, but which naturally, if not necessarily, attach to such a jurisdiction. Mr. Justice Blackstone has said: "As incident to accounts, they take a concurrent cognizance of the administration of personal assets ; consequently, of debts, legacies, the distribution of the residue, and the conduct of executors and administrators. As incident to accounts, they also take the concurrent jurisdiction of tithes, and all questions relating thereto ; of all dealings in partnership, and many other mercantile transactions ; and so of bailiffs, factors, and receivers. It would be endless to point out all the several avenues in human affairs, and in this commercial age, which lead to or end in accounts."³ But it is far from being admitted, that the sole origin of equity jurisdiction on these subjects arises from this source. It is one, but not the sole source. In many of these cases, as well as in others, which will hereafter be considered, in

come into equity for an account and payment, in lieu of suing at law, depends upon whether the accounts are of too complicated a nature to be gone into by a jury.]

¹ Ibid. ; Cooper, Eq. Pl. 134.

² *Ante*, § 67 ; Corporation of Carlisle v. Wilson, 13 Ves. 278.

³ 3 Black. Comm. 437.

which accounts may be taken, as incidents to the relief granted, there are other distinct if not independent sources of jurisdiction; and especially one source, which is the peculiar attribute of courts of equity, the jurisdiction over trusts not merely express, but implied and constructive.¹

§ 454. One of the most difficult questions, arising under this head (and which has been incidentally discussed in another place),² is to ascertain whether there are any, and, if any, what are the true boundaries of equity jurisdiction in such matters of account, as are cognizable at law. We say cognizable at law; for, wherever the account stands upon equitable claims, or has equitable trusts attached to it, there is no doubt that the jurisdiction is absolutely universal, and without exception; since the party is remediless at law.³

§ 455. But in cases where there is a remedy at law, there is no small confusion and difficulty in the authorities. The jurisdiction in matters of this sort has been asserted to be maintainable upon two grounds, distinct in their own nature, and yet often running into each other.⁴ In the first place it has been asserted, that where, in a matter of account, the party seeks a discovery of facts,

¹ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 522, 523, 543; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (f); 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 7, § 6, and notes.

² *Ante*, § 67.

³ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 504, 505, 506.

⁴ See *ante*, § 64 to 69, and note (1) to § 69; Corporation of Carlisle v. Wilson, 13 Ves. 278, 279. Lord-Chancellor Erskine, in Corporation of Carlisle v. Wilson, 13 Ves. 278, 279, maintained the concurrent jurisdiction of courts of equity, in matters of account, to a very broad extent. He said: "The principle upon which courts of equity originally entertained suits for an account, where the party had a legal title, is, that, though he might support a suit at law, a court of law either cannot give a remedy, or cannot give so complete a remedy as a court of equity; and by degrees, courts of equity assumed a concurrent jurisdiction in cases of account, for it cannot be maintained, that the court interferes only when no remedy can be had at law. The contrary is notorious." "The proposition asserted against this bill is, that this court ought to refuse to interfere, by directing an account, if an action for money had and received, or an *indebitatus assumpsit*, can be maintained. That proposition cannot be maintained," &c. "The proposition is, not that an account may be decreed in every case, where an action for money had and received, or *indebitatus assumpsit* may be brought (and certainly, *indebitatus assumpsit* lies for tolls); but that, where the subject cannot be so well investigated in those actions, this court exercises a sound discretion in decreeing an account." See what was said by Mr. Vice-Chancellor Wigram in *Pearce v. Cresswick*, 2 Hare, 286, 293, cited *ante*, § 64 *k*, note.

and these appear upon his bill to be material to his right of recovery; there, if the answer does, in fact make a discovery of such material facts (for it would be no ground of jurisdiction if the discovery failed),¹ the court, having once a rightful jurisdiction of the cause, ought to proceed to give relief, in order to avoid multiplicity of suits.² And this plain ground is asserted by the learned author of the Treatise of Equity, in a passage already cited; and it has been often maintained in the English courts of equity.³ But (as we have already seen)⁴ there are other authorities in the English courts, which conflict with this doctrine; and which, without attempting to lay down any rule for a practical discrimination as to cases within and cases without the jurisdiction, seem to deliver over the subject to interminable doubts.⁵

§ 456. The doctrine now generally (perhaps not universally) held in America, is (as we have seen),⁶ that in all cases where a court of equity has jurisdiction for discovery, and the discovery is effectual, that becomes a sufficient foundation upon which the court may proceed to grant full relief. In other words, where the court has legitimately acquired jurisdiction over the cause for the purpose of discovery, it will, to prevent multiplicity of suits, entertain the suit also for relief.⁷

¹ *Ante*, § 71, 74; *Russell v. Clarke's Ex'rs*, 7 Cranch, 69; *Dinwiddie v. Bailey*, 6 Ves. 140, 141.

² *Ryle v. Haggie*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 237.

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*); *ante*, § 64, 66; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 6, ch. 3, § 6; *Lee v. Alston*, 1 Bro. Ch. 195, 196; *Barker v. Dacie*, 6 Ves. 688; *Corporation of Carlisle v. Wilson*, 13 Ves. 278, 279.

⁴ *Ante*, § 64 *k*, 65, 66; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, note (*f*); note (*r*); *Parker v. Dee*, 2 Ch. Cas. 200, 201; 1 Eq. Abridg. A, p. 5; 2 Eq. Abridg. A, p. 4; *Ryle v. Haggie*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 237.

⁵ See *ante*, § 64 to 69, and note (1) to § 69; *Ambrose v. The Dunmow Union*, 9 Beavan, 512. Many of the cases on this head have been already commented on at large, in the note (1) to § 69. The difficulty of reconciling the authorities is very great. Is there any distinction between cases of account founded in *privity*, and those founded in *tort* (such as a waste, &c.)?

⁶ *Ante*, § 67, 71, 74; *Middletown Bank v. Russ*, 3 Connect. 135.

⁷ See *ante*, § 64 to 69, 71; *Armstrong v. Gilchrist*, 2 Johns. Cas. 424; *Rathbone v. Warren*, 10 Johns. 587; *King v. Baldwin*, 17 Johns. 384; *Ludlow v. Simond*, 2 Caines, Cas. Err. 1, 38, 39, 51, 52; *Stanley v. Cramer*, 4 Cowen, 727, 728. In *Fowle v. Lawrason*, 5 Peters, Sup. Ct. 495, Mr. C. Just. Marshall, in delivering the opinion of the court, said: "That a court of chancery has jurisdiction in matters of account cannot be questioned; nor can it be doubted that this jurisdiction is often beneficially exercised; but it cannot be admitted that a court

§ 457. Another and more general ground has been asserted for the jurisdiction; and that is, not that there is no remedy at law, but that the remedy is more complete and adequate in equity; and besides, that it prevents a multiplicity of suits. This is, indeed, a very broad and general ground of jurisdiction; and especially as applied to cases founded in privity of contract, where it is contemplated that the matter should give rise to an account.¹ Upon this ground, Lord Hardwicke expressed himself in favor of the jurisdiction generally, in a case then before him, saying: "It is a matter of contract and account, and consequently a proper subject for the jurisdiction of this court."² And this is manifestly the doctrine maintained by Lord Redesdale, who said that, in matters of account, "a court of equity will entertain jurisdiction of a suit, though a remedy might perhaps be had in the courts of common law. The ground upon which courts of equity first interfered in these cases, seems to have been the difficulty of proceeding to the full extent of justice in the courts of common law." And, in a note, it is added: "Perhaps, in some of these cases, the jurisdiction was first assumed to prevent multiplicity of suits."³ He sub-

of equity may take cognizance of every action, for goods, wares, and merchandise sold and delivered, or of money advanced, where partial payments have been made, or of every contract, express or implied, consisting of various items, on which different sums of money have become due and different payments have been made. Although the line may not be drawn with absolute precision; yet it may be safely affirmed that a court of chancery cannot draw to itself every transaction between individuals in which an account between parties is to be adjusted. In all cases in which an action of account would be the proper remedy at law, and in all cases where a trustee is a party, the jurisdiction of a court of equity is undoubted. It is the appropriate tribunal. But in transactions not of this peculiar character, great complexity ought to exist in the accounts, or some difficulty at law should interpose, some discovery should be required, in order to induce a court of chancery to exercise jurisdiction. 1 *Mad. Chan.* 86; 6 *Ves.* 136; 9 *Ves.* 437. In the case at bar these difficulties do not occur. The plaintiff sues on a contract by which real property is leased to the defendant, and admits himself to be in full possession of all the testimony he requires to support his action. The defendant opposes to this claim, as an offset, a sum of money due to him for goods sold and delivered, and for money advanced; no item of which is alleged to be contested. We cannot think such a case proper for a court of chancery."

¹ *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5; *Barker v. Dacie*, 6 *Ves.* 688; 3 *Black. Comm.* 437.

² *Billon v. Hyde*, 1 *Atk.* 127, 128.

³ *Mitford on Eq. Pl.* by *Jeremy*, 119, 120; *Barker v. Dacie*, 6 *Ves.* 688; *Mackenzie v. Johnston*, 4 *Mad.* 374.

sequently said: "The courts of equity, having gone the length of assuming jurisdiction in a variety of complicated cases of account, &c., seem by degrees to have been considered as having on these subjects a concurrent jurisdiction with the courts of common law, in cases where no difficulty could have attended the proceedings in those courts."¹ In cases of mutual accounts founded in privity of contract, this doctrine is, in the English courts, acted upon in the most ample manner in our day, without any limitation;² as it certainly is fully maintained in America.³

§ 458. Courts of equity will also entertain jurisdiction in matters of account, not only when there are mutual accounts, but also when the accounts to be examined are on one side only, and a discovery is wanted in aid of the account, and is obtained.⁴

¹ Mit. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 123. See also *O'Connor v. Spaight*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 309; *Barker v. Dacie*, 6 Ves. 688; *Corporation of Carlisle v. Wilson*, 13 Ves. 276; *Coop. Eq. Pl., Introd.* 31; *Duke of Leeds v. Radnor*, 2 Bro. Ch. 338, 518.

² *Dinwiddie v. Bailey*, 6 Ves. 140, 141; 2 Parl. Report of Common Law Commissioners, 1830, p. 26; *Courtenay v. Godshall*, 9 Ves. 473.

³ *Armstrong v. Gilchrist*, 2 Johns. Cas. 424; *Rathbone v. Warren*, 10 Johns. 587; *King v. Baldwin*, 17 Johns. 384; *Ludlow v. Simond*, 2 Caines, Cas. Err. 1, 38, 39, 51, 52; *Post v. Kimberly*, 9 Johns. 493; *Hawley v. Cramer*, 4 Cowen, 727, 728; 2 Parl. Report of the Common Law Commissioners, 1830, p. 26; *Porter v. Spencer*, 2 Johns. Ch. 171.

⁴ *Barker v. Dacie*, 6 Ves. 687, 688; *Frietas v. Don Santos*, 1 Y. & Jerv. 574; *Courtenay v. Godshall*, 9 Ves. 473; *Mackenzie v. Johnston*, 4 Mad. 374; *Massey v. Banner*, 4 Mad. 416, 417; *Ludlow v. Simond*, 2 Cain. Err. 38, 52; *Post v. Kimberly*, 9 Johns. 470, 493. The Vice Chancellor (Sir John Leach) has held generally, that, in all cases of agency, a bill will lie in equity for an account by the principal against his agent. *Mackenzie v. Johnston*, 4 Mad. 374; *Massey v. Banner*, 4 Mad. 416. The ground seems to be, though not explicitly stated by him, that, there being a necessity for a discovery, the relief is consequent on that; and that it would be most unreasonable, that he should pay his agent for a discovery, and then be turned round to a suit at law, which would be the case, if he could not have relief on his bill. The case of *Hoare v. Contencin* (1 Bro. Ch. 27) is distinguishable; for there the bill was to recover back money lent, and no discovery seemed necessary. Lord Thurlow said: "As to an account, this is only of a repayment of money, and that the money for which the teas sold should be deducted. As it stood originally, therefore, the bill could not have been supported." In *Frietas v. Don Santos* (1 Y. & Jerv. 574), the Court of Exchequer said: "It is the settled practice at this time, that, if a bill be filed for a discovery, the relief is made ancillary to it; and the party must stand or fall by the discovery, &c. It is not every account, which will entitle a court of equity to interfere. It must be such an account as cannot be taken, justly and

But, in such a case, if no discovery is asked, or required by the frame of the bill, the jurisdiction will not be maintainable.¹ And, *à fortiori*, where there are no mutual demands, but a single matter on one side, and no discovery is required, a court of equity will not entertain jurisdiction of the suit, although there may be payments on the other side, which may be set off; for in such a case, there is not only a complete remedy at law, but there is nothing requiring the peculiar aid of equity, to ascertain or adjust the claim.² To found the jurisdiction, in cases of a claim of this sort, there should be a series of transactions on one side, and of payments on the other.

§ 458 *a.* So, it has been said, “that, if there be a bill for an account in respect of particular items, or any number of particular items, and the plaintiff fails in sustaining the demand upon those particular items, and the bill happens to contain a general vague charge that there are voluminous and intricate accounts between the parties, and which charge is inserted merely as a pretext for the purpose of bringing the case within the jurisdiction of a court of equity, the court, in so vague and uncertain a case, will disregard that general allegation, will consider it as struck out of the bill, and not allow it to protect the bill against a demurrer for want of equity.”³

fairly, in a court of law.” The same doctrine was asserted in *King v. Rossett* (2 Y. & Jerv. 33), which was a bill by a principal against his agent for discovery and relief. Lord Chief Baron Comyns, in his invaluable Digest (Chancery, 2 A.), lays down the principle broadly upon his own authority, that “Chancery will oblige any one to give an account for money by him received.”

¹ *Dinwiddie v. Bailey*, 6 Ves. 136; *Frietas v. Don Santos*, 1 Y. & Jerv. 574; *King v. Rossett*, 2 Y. & Jerv. 33; *Cooper*, Eq. Pl. 134; but see *Mackenzie v. Johnston*, 4 Mad. 374; *Massey v. Banner*, 4 Mad. 416; *Foley v. Hill*, 2 House of Lords Cases, 28; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 2 A.

² *Wells v. Cooper*, cited in *Dinwiddie v. Bailey*, 6 Ves. 139; *Foster v. Spencer*, 2 Johns. Ch. 171; *Moses v. Lewis*, 12 Price, 502; *King v. Rossett*, 2 Y. & Jerv. 33; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 70, 71.

³ *Darthez v. Clemens*, 6 Beavan, 165, 169. On this occasion, Lord Langdale said: “It therefore comes to this, Does this bill contain such vague and general statements, — statements put in merely as a pretext for transferring the jurisdiction from the court of law to this court? If the account can be fairly taken in a court of common law, this court will not interfere, even in the case of merchant's accounts consisting of mutual dealings; but in this case I am persuaded not only that the accounts between these parties could not be advantageously taken in a court of law, but that they could not be taken at all there. Everybody

§ 459. So that, on the whole, it may be laid down as a general doctrine, that in matters of account, growing out of privity of contract, courts of equity have a general jurisdiction where there are mutual accounts (and *à fortiori*, where these accounts are complicated), and also where the accounts are on one side, but a discovery is sought, and is material to the relief.¹ And, on the other hand, where the accounts are all on one side, and no discovery is sought or required; and also, where there is a single matter on the side of the plaintiff seeking relief, and mere set-offs on the other side, and no discovery is sought or required; in all such cases courts of equity will decline taking jurisdiction of the cause.² The reason is, that no peculiar remedial process or functions of a court of equity are required; and if, under such circumstances, the court were to entertain the suit, it would merely administer the same functions in the same way as a court of law would in the suit. In short, it would act as a court of law.

[* § 459 a. In a very late case, where the matter of the concurrent jurisdiction of courts of law and equity, in matters of account, is extensively discussed, it is said, that, where parties have elected to proceed at law, a court of equity would not stay such proceedings simply on the ground that it could more conveniently dispose of the suit; nor would a court of equity refuse its aid, when invoked, because a court of law could completely settle the whole of the disputed accounts.³ This case is called in question, however, by a writer in the *London Jurist*,⁴ who goes into an extensive examination of the English cases to show, that to give courts of equity jurisdiction in matters of account, there must be either: 1. Mutual accounts; 2. Dealings so complicated, that they cannot properly be adjusted in a court of law; or, 3. The existence of a fiduciary relation between the parties.⁵]

knows how an action upon such an account would necessarily end: it would end in the account being taken in this court, or by reference."

¹ *Mackenzie v. Johnston*, 4 Mad. 374; *Massey v. Banner*, 4 Mad. 416, 417; *Pendleton v. Wambersie*, 4 Cranch, 73.

² See *ante*, § 458, and cases there cited. But see Com. Dig. Chancery, 2 A.

³ [* *Scott v. The Corporation of Liverpool*, 5 Jur. n. s. 105; s. c. 7 W. R. 153.

⁴ *Jurist* of 26th March, 1859.

⁵ Under the first head he cites, *Phillips v. Phillips*, 9 Hare, 471; *Padwick v. Hurst*, 18 Beavan, 575; upon the second proposition, *O'Connor v. Spaight*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 305; *O'Mahony v. Dickson*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 400; and *Foley v. Hill*,

§ 459 *b*. APPROPRIATION. In matters of account, where several debts are due by the debtor to the creditor, it often becomes material to ascertain to what debt a particular payment made by the debtor is to be applied. This is called in our law the appropriation of payments. It is called in the foreign law the imputation of payments,¹ a phrase apparently borrowed from the Roman law, where the doctrine of the appropriation of payments is carefully examined, and the leading distinctions applicable to it amply discussed.² The doctrine may, of course, find a place wherever there exist separate and independent debts between the parties; but it is chiefly in cases of running accounts between debtor and creditor, where various payments have been made, and various credits have been given at different times, that its application is felt in its full force and importance, especially where the dealings have been with a firm, as, for example, with bankers, and one or more of the partners have deceased, and the customer still continues his dealings with the new firm, or the survivors of the old firm, and moneys have been paid in, and drawn out, from time to time.³ The same question often occurs, in cases of public officers, where they have given different bonds, at different times, with different sureties, for the faithful performance of their duties, and moneys have been received by them at different periods, embracing one or more of the bonds. How, in such cases, where running accounts are kept of debts and payments, of credits and receipts, are the payments, made at different times, before and after the change of the firm, or the change of sureties, to be appropriated? This, in former times, was a matter of no inconsiderable embarrassment and difficulty. At present, the following propositions may be deemed well settled. In the first place, in the case of running accounts between parties, where there are various items of debt on one side, and various items of credit on the other side, occurring at different times, and no special appropriation of the payments is made by either party, the successive payments or credits are to be applied to the discharge of the items of debit, antecedently due, in the

2 H. L. Cases, 28; and upon the third, *Navulshaw v. Brownrigg*, 1 Sim. *n. s.* 573; *s. c.* 2 De G., M. & G. 441. These cases seem to justify the propositions laid down by the writer.]

¹ Pothier, on Oblig. by Evans, *n.* 528 (*id.* *n.* 561, Fr. edit. 1824).

² Pothier, Pand. Lib. 46, tit. 3, *n.* 89 to 103.

³ *Bank of Scotland v. Christie*, 8 Clark & Finell. 214.

order of time in which they stand in the account; or, in other words, each item of payment or credit is applied in extinguishment of the earliest items of debt standing in the account, until the whole payment or credit is exhausted.¹ In the next place, where there are no running accounts between the parties, and the debtor himself makes no special appropriation of any payment, there the creditor is generally at liberty to apply that payment to any one or more of the debts which the debtor owes him, whether it be upon an account or otherwise.² [It being understood, however, that a creditor has not a right to apply a general payment to any item of account which is itself illegal, and contrary to law, as, a claim for usurious interest; a charge for articles sold contrary to law; and the like: although if the debtor himself apply the payment to an illegal demand, he cannot afterwards revoke it.³]

§ 459 c. The doctrine here stated proceeds partly upon the presumed intention of the parties, and partly upon a rule which has been assumed in our law, that the debtor has a right to appropriate any payments which he makes to whatever debt, due to his creditor, he may choose to apply it. If the debtor omits to make any such appropriation, then the creditor has a right to appropriate the payment to such debts, due to him by the debtor, as he may choose.⁴ And, if neither party has made any appropriation thereof, then the law will make the appropriation according to its notion of the equity and justice of the case, and so that it may be most

¹ Clayton's case, 1 Meriv. 572, 604, 608; Devaynes v. Noble, 1 Meriv. 585; Bodenham v. Purchas, 2 Barn. & Ald. 39; Simson v. Cooke, 1 Bing. 452; Simson v. Ingham, 2 Barn. & Cressw. 65; Truscott v. King, 2 Selden, 147; Pemberton v. Oakes, 4 Russ. 154; Bank of Scotland v. Christie, 3 Clark & Finnell 214, 229; United States v. Kirkpatrick, 9 Wheat. 720, 737, 738; United States v. Wardwell, 5 Mason, 82, 87; McDowell v. The Blackstone Canal Co., 5 Mason, 11; The Postmaster General v. Furber, 4 Mason, 333, 335; Gass v. Stinson, 3 Sumner, 99, 110-112; Williams v. Griffith, 5 Mees. & Welsb. 300; Campbell v. Hodgson, Gow, 74; Hall v. Wood, 14 East, 243, n.; Thompson v. Brown, Mood. & Malk. 40; Taylor v. Kymer, 3 Barn. & Adolph. 320, 333; Copland v. Tentman, 1 West (House of Lords), 364; s. c. 7 Clark & Finnell.

² Lysaght v. Walker, 3 Bligh (N. S.), 1, 28; Bosanquet v. Wray, 6 Taunt. 597; Brooke v. Enderby, 2 Brod. & Bing. 70; *post*, § 459 h.

³ Caldwell v. Wentworth, 14 N. H. 431; Bancroft v. Dumas, 21 Verm. 456; Parchman v. McKinney, 12 Sm. & Mar. 681; Ayer v. Hawkins, 19 Verm. 26; Rohan v. Hanson, 11 Cush. 44.

⁴ See Upham v. Lefavour, 11 Met. 174.

beneficial to both the parties.¹ In this view, the appropriation of payments upon running accounts, as above stated, seems most consonant to the intentions and interests of both of the parties, and is full of equity and justice.²

§ 459 *d*. The Roman law proceeded, in a great measure, if not altogether, upon similar principles. But according to that law, the election was to be made at the time of payment, as well in the case of the creditor as in that of the debtor: "In re præsentī, hoc est statim atque solutum est: — cæterum postea non permittitur."³ If neither applied the payment, the law made the appropriation according to certain rules of presumption, depending on the nature of the debts or the priority in which they were incurred. And as it was the actual intention of the debtor, that would, in the first instance have governed; so it was his presumable intention that was first resorted to, as the rule by which the application was to be determined. In the absence, therefore, of any express declaration by either, the inquiry was, What application would be most beneficial to the debtor? The payment was consequently applied to the most burdensome debt, — to one that carried interest, rather than to that which carried none, — to one secured by a penalty rather than to that which rested on a simple stipulation; — and if the debts were equal, then to that which had been first contracted.

¹ *United States v. January & Pattleson*, 7 Cranch, 572; *U. States v. Kirkpatrick*, 9 Wheat. 720, 737; *U. States v. Wardwell*, 5 Mason, 82; *Postmaster General v. Furber*, 4 Mason, 333; *Gass v. Stinson*, 3 Sumner, 99, 110 to 112; *post*, § 459 *e*; *Smith v. Lloyd*, 11 Leigh, 512; *Seymour v. Van Slyck*, 8 Wend. 403; *U. States v. Eckford's Ex'ors*, 1 Howard, Sup. Ct. 250; *s. c.* 17 Peters, 251; 2 Greenleaf on Evid. § 530 to 535; *Callahan v. Boazman*, 21 Ala. 246.

² *Ibid.* As to what circumstances will amount to an appropriation or not, see *Taylor v. Kymer*, 3 Barn. & Adolph. 320, 333, 334; *Marryatts v. White*, 2 Starkie, 101; *Goddard v. Hodges*, 1 Crompt. & Mees. 33; *Wright v. Laing*, 3 Barn. & Cressw. 165; *Birch v. Talbot*, 2 Starkie, 74; *Simson v. Ingham*, 2 Barn. & Cressw. 65.

³ *Dig. Lib.* 46, tit. 3, l. 5. The text of the Roman law on this whole subject will be found in the *American Law Magazine* for April, 1843 (Philad.), p. 36, 37, 38, with a learned dissertation on the whole subject. Mr. Ch. Just. Gibson has contested the leading doctrines of that article, whether satisfactorily or not, it will be for the profession to decide. But it may be affirmed, without scruple, that whoever studies the subject the most profoundly, will be very likely to find that all the difficulties are not as easily solved as he, upon a slight examination, might be led to suppose.

“In his vero, quæ præsentī die debentur, constat, quotiens indistincte quid solvitur, in graviorem causam videri solutum. Si autem nulla prægravet, — id est si omnia nomina similia fuerint, antiquiorem.”¹ Pothier, in his edition of the Pandects, has collected together all the texts of the Roman law on this subject;² and he has summed up the general results in his Treatise on Obligations.³

¹ Dig. Lib. 46, tit. 3, Qu. 5; Clayton's case, 1 Meriv. 604, 605.

² Pothier, Pand. Lib. 46, tit. 3, art. 1, n. 89 to 99. The doctrine of the Roman law is still more fully shown, and compared with the common-law decisions, in a very able note to the case of *Pattison v. Hull*, 9 Cowen, 773 to 777, to which I gladly refer.

³ Pothier, Oblig. by Evans, n. 528 to 535; id. n. 561 to n. 572, French, 2d edit. 1829; *Gass v. Stinson*, 3 Sumner, 98, 111. It may not be without use to insert here the leading rules stated by Pothier: “First Rule. The debtor has the power of declaring on account of what debt he intends to apply the sum which he pays. The reason which Ulpian gives is evident, ‘*possumus enim certam legem dicere, ei quod solvimus.*’ According to our rule, although regularly the interest should be paid before the principal, yet if the debtor of the principal and interest, upon paying a sum of money, has declared that he paid on account of the principal, the creditor who has agreed to receive it cannot afterwards contest such application. Second Rule. If the debtor, at the time of paying, makes no application, the creditor to whom the money is due, for different causes, may make the application by the acquittance which he gives. It is requisite, 1st. That this application be made at the instant; 2d. That it be equitable. Third Rule. When the application has neither been made by the debtor nor by the creditor, it ought to be made to that debt which the debtor at the time had the most interest to discharge. The application should rather be made to a debt which is not contested than to one that is; rather to a debt which was due at the time of payment than to one which was not. Among several debts which are due the application ought rather to be made to the debt for which the debtor was liable to be imprisoned than to debts merely civil, in respect of which process could only issue against his effects. Among civil debts, the application should rather be made to those which produce interest than to those which do not. The application ought rather to be made to an hypothecatory debt than to another. The application ought rather to be made to the debt for which the debtor had given sureties than to those which he owed singly. The reason is, that in discharging it, he discharges himself from two creditors, — from his principal creditor and from his surety, whom he is obliged to indemnify. Now, a debtor has more interest to be acquitted against two than against a single creditor. The application ought rather to be made for a debt of which the person who has paid was principal debtor, than to those which he owed as surety for other persons. Fourth Rule. If the debts are of an equal nature, and such that the debtor had no interest in acquitting one rather than the other, the application should be made to that of the longest standing. Observe, that of two debts contracted the same day, but with different terms, which are both expired, the debt of which the term

§ 459 *e.* Now the whole of this doctrine of the Roman law turns upon the intention of the debtor, either express, implied, or presumed; express, when he has directed the application of the payment, as in all cases he had a right to do; implied, when he knowingly has allowed the creditor to make a particular application at the time of payment, without objection; presumed, when in the absence of any such special appropriation, it is most for his benefit to apply it to a particular debt. And, notwithstanding there are contradictory and conflicting authorities on this subject in the English and American courts, one should think that the doctrine of the Roman law is, or at least ought to be, held, and may well be held, to be the true doctrine to govern in our courts. There is a great weight of common-law authority in its favor; and, in the conflict of judicial opinion, that rule may fairly be adopted, which is most rational, convenient, and consonant to the presumed intention of the parties. If the creditor has a right, in any case, to elect to what debt to appropriate an indefinite payment, it seems proper that he should have it only when it is utterly indifferent to the debtor, to which it is applied, and then, perhaps, his consent, that the creditor may apply it as he pleases, may fairly be presumed.¹

§ 459 *f.* Be this, however, as it may, in the actual application of the doctrine to cases of partnership, where a change of the

was the shorter, and consequently which expired sooner, is understood to be the more ancient. Fifth Rule. If the different debts are of the same date, and in other respects equal, the application should be made proportionately to each. Sixth Rule. In debts which are of a nature to produce interest, the application is made to the interest before the principal. This holds good even if the acquittance imported that the sum was paid to the account of the principal and interest, 'in sortem et usuras.' The clause is understood in this sense, that the sum is received to the account of the principal after the interest is satisfied. Observe, that if the sum paid exceeds what is due for interest, the remainder is applied to the principal, even if the application had been expressly made to the interest, without mentioning the principal."

¹ *Ante*, § 459 *c.*, 459 *e.*; *Gass v. Stinson*, 3 Sumner, 98, 111; *Pattison v. Hull*, 9 Cowen, 747, 765 to 773; *Clayton's case*, 1 Meriv. 605, 606, 607, 608. But see *Hall v. Wood*, 14 East, 243, n.; *Kirby v. Duke of Marlborough*, 2 Maule & Sel. 19; *Marryatts v. White*, 2 Starkie, 101; *Peters v. Anderson*, 5 Taunt. 596; *Bosanquet v. Wray*, 6 Taunt. 597; *Shaw v. Picton*, 4 Barn. & Cressw. 715. See an elaborate article on the question of the Appropriation of Payments in the *American Law Magazine* (Philadelphia), No. 1, for April, 1843, p. 31 to 52. See also 1 *American Lead. Cas.* 123, and notes.

firm has occurred by a dissolution by death or otherwise, the rule is, that the estate of the deceased or retiring partner is liable only to the extent of the balance due to any creditor at the time of the dissolution; and that if the creditor continues to keep a running account with the survivors, or the new firm, and sums are paid to them by the creditor, and sums are drawn on their firm, and paid by them, and are charged and credited to the general account, and blended together as a common fund, without any distinction between the sums due to the creditor by the old firm and the new; in such a case, the sums paid to the creditor are deemed to be paid upon the general blended account, and go to extinguish, *pro tanto*, the balance of the old firm, in the order of the earliest items thereof. "In such a case" (it has been said by a very able judge) "there is no room for any other appropriation than that which arises from the order in which the receipts and payments take place, and are carried into the account. Presumably, it is the sum first paid in, that is first drawn out. It is the first item on the debit side of the account, that is discharged or reduced by the first item on the credit side. The appropriation is made by the very act of setting the two items against each other. Upon that principle all accounts current are settled, and particularly cash accounts. When there has been a continuation of dealings, in what way can it be ascertained whether the specific balance, due on a given day, has or has not been discharged but by examining, whether payments to the amount of that balance appear by the account to have been made? You are not to take the account backwards, and strike the balance at the head, instead of the foot of it. A man's banker breaks, owing him, on the whole account, a balance of £1,000. It would surprise one to hear the customer say: 'I have been fortunate enough to draw out all that I paid in during the last four years; but there is £1,000 which I paid in five years ago, that I hold myself never to have drawn out; and, therefore, if I can find anybody who was answerable for the debts of the banking-house, such as they stood five years ago, I have a right to say, that it is that specific sum which is still due to me, and not the £1,000 that I paid in last week.'"¹

¹ Sir William Grant, in *Clayton's case*, 1 Meriv. 608, 609; *Johne's case*, 1 Meriv. 619; *Smith v. Wigley*, 3 Moore & Scott, 174; *Sterndale v. Hankinson*, 1 Simons, 393; *Bodenham v. Purchas*, 2 Barn. & Ald. 39; *Pemberton v. Oakes*, 4 Russ. 154; *Bank of Scotland v. Christie*, 8 Clark & Finnell. 214, 227, 228.

§ 459 *g*. On the other hand, if, under the like circumstances, moneys have been received by the new firm, and drawn out by the creditor from time to time, and upon the whole, the original balance due to the creditor has been increased, but never at any time been diminished, in the hands of the firm; in such a case, the items of payment made by the new firm are still to be applied to the extinguishment of the balance of the old firm, and will discharge the share of the deceased or retiring partner to that extent, but no further; for, in such a case, the general rule as to running accounts is applied with its full force.¹ *A fortiori*, where payments have been made, and no new sums have been deposited by the creditor with the new firm, the payments will be applied in extinguishment, *pro tanto*, of the balance due by the old firm, in the order of the items thereof.²

§ 459 *h*. The cases which we have hitherto been considering, are cases of running accounts; and, under such circumstances, the rule will apply equally to cases where a part of the debt is secured by a guaranty or by sureties as well as where there are no such parties.³ But, where there are no such running accounts, if no special appropriation is made by the debtor, the creditor may, as we have seen,⁴ apply the money to any [legal] demand which he has against the debtor, whether it be a balance of an old account, or of a new account; for, in such a case the interest of third persons is not concerned, and the case of running accounts constitutes, as it were, an implied appropriation by the parties to the account generally.⁵ And payments made generally by a

¹ Palmer's case, 1 Meriv. 623, 624; Sleech's case, 1 Meriv. 538; Bodenham v. Purchas, 2 Barn. & Ald. 39. See *In re Mason*, 3 Mont., Deac. & De Gex, 490; Law Magazine, May, 1845, p. 184.

² Sleech's case, 1 Meriv. 538, &c.

³ United States v. Kirkpatrick, 9 Wheat. 720, 737, 738; United States v. Wardwell, 5 Mason, 82, 87; Postmaster General v. Furber, 4 Mason, 333, 335. But see United States v. Eckford's Ex'ors, 1 Howard, Sup. Ct. 250; s. c. 17 Peters, 251; United States v. January, 7 Cranch, 572.

⁴ *Ante*, § 459 *b*.

⁵ Lysaght v. Walker, 5 Bligh (n. s.), 1, 28; Bosanquet v. Wray, 6 Taunt. 597; Brooke v. Endeby, 2 Brod. & Bing. 70. In United States v. January, 7 Cranch, 572, it seems to have been thought by a majority of the court, "that the rule adopted in ordinary cases is not applicable to a case where different sureties under different obligators are in interest." But that case was one of a public officer, who had given bonds at different times. The case was very obscurely reported; but its true bearing is stated in a note to United States v.

debtor to his creditor, may be applied by the creditor to a balance due to the creditor, although other debts have since been incurred, upon which the debtor has given a bond, with a surety, for security thereof.¹ By the Scotch law, a creditor, having several debts due from the same debtor, has a right to ascribe a payment made indefinitely and without appropriation by his debtor, to whichever debt he may see fit to apply it, and is entitled to make this appropriation and election even at the latest hour.² The rule of our law seems (as we have seen) more qualified, and to omit the right of election of the creditor to a reasonable period after the payment, or to cases where the appropriation may be presumed to be indifferent to the debtor.³

§ 460. In cases of account not founded in any such privity of contract, but founded upon relations and duties required by law, or upon torts and constructive trust, for which equitable redress is sought, it is more difficult to trace out a distinct line, where the legal remedy ends, and the equitable jurisdiction begins.

§ 461. In our subsequent examination of this branch of jurisdiction, it certainly would not be going beyond its just boundaries, to include within it all subjects which arise from the two great sources already indicated, and terminate in matters of account; namely, first, such as have their foundation in contract, or *quasi* contract, and, secondly, such as have their foundation in trusts, actual or constructive, or in torts affecting property. But, as many cases included under one head are often connected with principles belonging to the other, and as the jurisdiction of courts of equity is often exercised upon various grounds, not completely embraced in either; or upon mixed considerations; it will be more convenient, and perhaps not less philosophical, to treat the various topics under their own appropriate heads, without any nice discrimination between them. We may thus bring together in this

Wardwell, 5 Mason, 87. It is true, that the case of *United States v. January* has been recognized as good law in *United States v. Eckford's Ex'ors*, 1 How. Sup. Ct. 250, 261. But there were peculiar circumstances in this last case; and *United States v. Kirkpatrick* expressly recognizes the general doctrine of appropriation.

¹ *Kirby v. Duke of Marlborough*, 2 M. & Selw. 18; *Williams v. Rawlinson*, 3 Bing. 71; *Parr v. Howlin*, 1 Alc. & Nap. 197.

² *Campbell v. Dant*, 2 Moore, Priv. Coun. 292. See *Moss v. Adams*, 4 Iredell, Eq. 42.

³ *Ante*, § 459 b, 459 c. See *Caldwell v. Wentworth*, 14 N. H. 431.

place such topics only as do not seem to belong to more enlarged subjects, or such as do not require any elaborate discussion, or such as peculiarly furnish matter of illustration of the general principles which regulate the jurisdiction.

§ 462. Let us, then, in the first place, bring together some cases arising *ex contractu*, or *quasi ex contractu*, and involving accounts. And here, one of the most general heads is that of AGENCY, where one person is employed to transact the business of another for a recompense or compensation. The most important agencies of this sort which fall under the cognizance of courts of equity, are those of attorneys, factors, bailiffs, consignees, receivers, and stewards.¹ In most agencies of this sort, there are mutual accounts between the parties; or, if the account is on one side, as the relation naturally gives rise to great personal confidence between the parties, it rarely happens that the principal is able, in cases of controversy, to establish his rights, or to ascertain the true state of the accounts, without resorting to a discovery from the agent. Indeed, in cases of factorage and consignments, and general receipts and disbursements of money by receivers and stewards, it can scarcely be possible, if the relation has long subsisted, that very intricate and perplexing accounts should not have arisen, where, independently of a discovery, the remedy of the principal would be utterly nugatory, or grossly defective. It would be rare, that specific sales and purchases, and the charges growing out of them, could be ascertained and traced out with any reasonable certainty; and still more rare, that every receipt and disbursement could be verified by direct and positive evidence. The rules

¹ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 513 to 515. In general, a bill will not lie by an agent against his principal, for an account, unless some special ground is laid; as the incapacity to get proof, unless by discovery. *Dinwiddie v. Bailey* (6 Ves. 136). But in the case of stewards, a discovery from his principal is ordinarily necessary, for the reasons stated by Lord Eldon in the same case (6 Ves. 141). "The nature of this dealing is, that money is paid in confidence, without vouchers, embracing a great variety of accounts with the tenants; and nine times in ten, it is impossible that justice be done to the steward," without going into equity for an account against his principal. See *Middleditch v. Sharland*, 5 Ves. 87; *Moses v. Lewis*, 12 Price, 502. In this last case the court refused to entertain jurisdiction for an account, it appearing that the whole matter was a set-off or other defence at law. The court admitted the general jurisdiction of courts of equity in matters of account; but denied that it was applicable to cases of this sort. *Id.* 510. See also *Frietas v. Don Santos*, 1 Y. & Jerv. 574.

of law in all such agencies require that the agent should keep regular accounts of all his transactions, with suitable vouchers.¹ And it is obvious, that if he can suppress all means of access to his books of account and vouchers, the principal would be utterly without redress, except by the searching power of a bill of discovery, and the close inspection of all books, under the authority and guidance of a Master in Chancery. Besides, agents are not only responsible for a due account of all the property of their principals, but also for all profits which they have clandestinely obtained by any improper use of that property. And the only adequate means of reaching such profits must be by such a bill of discovery.² In cases of fraud, also, it is almost impracticable to thread all the intricacies of its combinations, except by searching the conscience of the party, and examining his books and vouchers; neither of which can be done by the courts of common law.³

[* § 462 a. The bare relation of principal and agent does not entitle the principal to come into a court of equity for an account, if the matter can be fairly tried at law.⁴ And where the principal brought a bill for an account against one employed as commercial traveller, he was held entitled to an account only from the time of giving notice to the agent to keep and render a special account.⁵ And it was here held that special damage by reason of the misconduct of the agent was no ground for compensation by way of an account. And an agent cannot maintain a bill for an account upon the ground alone, that he was entitled to commissions for his services.⁶ But if the defendant as agent has received sums of money for the plaintiff, the particulars and amount of which are

¹ *Pearce v. Green*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 135; *Ormond v. Hutchinson*, 13 Ves. 53; *Clarke v. Tipping*, 9 Beavan, 284.

² *East India Company v. Hinchman*, 1 Ves. Jr. 289; *Massey v. Davies*, 2 Ves. Jr. 318; *Borr v. Vandall*, 1 Ch. Cas. 30.

³ *Earl of Hardwicke v. Vernon*, 14 Ves. 510.

⁴ [* *Barry v. Stevens*, 31 Beav. 258. But in *Makepiece v. Rogers*, 11 Jur. n. s. 314; s. c. 34 L. J. n. s. Ch. 396; in the court of Chancery Appeal, Lord Justice Turner said, "There was no authority for saying that a bill would not lie at any time by a principal against an agent for an account." And his lordship regretted that any thing said by him in *Phillips v. Phillips*, 9 Hare, 471, should have induced a contrary opinion.

⁵ *Hunter v. Belcher*, 9 Law T. n. s. 501.

⁶ *Smith v. Leveaux*, 1 H. & M. 123; s. c. 2 De G., J. & S. 1.

unknown to him, a bill praying for discovery and an account will be maintained.¹ Where the accounts are too complicated to be dealt with in a court of law, a court of equity will entertain jurisdiction.²

§ 462 *b*. There is a somewhat remarkable case³ decided by Lord Chelmsford, Chancellor, in regard to the liability of an agent to account for money in his hands. The defendant had been the plaintiff's steward and most confidential agent for nearly twenty years, receiving and paying out all his moneys, and even drawing all the money from his bank account, for the plaintiff's own private use during all the time. There were accounts rendered, occasionally but not regularly, for the first ten years; then no accounts for five years, when complaint being made, he rendered accounts annually for the last four years. The plaintiff finally had the accounts examined by a solicitor, who discovered errors and omissions, when this bill was brought, and the balance found in the defendant's hands exceeded £4,000, upon which the plaintiff claimed to charge interest for the balances due at the end of each year. The Lord Chancellor held that as there was no satisfactory evidence to charge the defendant with fraud, in purposely withholding the money, and there had been no demand for an account, interest could only be charged from the date of the master's report. The decision must be regarded, in this country, as exceedingly unsatisfactory. It is clear that the defendant must either have intentionally withheld the money, or else that he was guilty of gross neglect; and in either case he should be charged with annual interest. So, too, upon another ground, he either did receive, or might have received, interest upon the money while in his hands, and in either view he is responsible for interest. And again the plaintiff was entitled to have the money due, at the end of each year, and would have received it but for the defendant's fault; and may be presumed either to have paid interest for the want of the money, or else it may be inferred that he would have placed the same at interest if it had been paid when due.]

§ 463. In agencies also of a single nature, such as a single consignment, or the delivery of money to be laid out in the purchase

¹ Hemings v. Pugh, 9 Jur. N. s. 1124, s. c. 4 Gill, 456.

² Hill v. So. Staffordshire Railway, 11 Jur. N. s. 192.

³ Turner v. Burkinshaw, Law Rep. 2 Ch. App. 488. How far the party injured by the fraud of another may lose his remedy by acquiescence, see *post*, § 1539 *a*.]

of an estate, or of a cargo of goods; or to be paid over to a third person; although a suit at law may be often maintainable,¹ yet, if the thing lie in privity of contract and personal confidence, the aid of a court of equity is often indispensable for the attainment of justice. Even when not indispensable, it may often be exceedingly convenient and effectual, and prevent a multiplicity of suits. The party in such cases often has an election of remedy. This doctrine was expounded with great clearness and force by Lord Chief Justice Willes, in delivering the opinion of the court in a celebrated case. Speaking of the propriety of sometimes resorting to a suit at law, he said: "Though a bill in equity may be proper in several of these cases, yet an action at law will lie likewise. As if I pay money to another, to lay out in the purchase of a particular estate, or any other thing, I may either bring a bill against him, considering him as a trustee, and praying that he may lay out the money in that specific thing; or I may bring an action against him, as for so much money had and received for my use. Courts of equity always retain such bills, when they are brought under the notion of a trust; and therefore, in this very case (a consignment to a factor for sale), they have often given relief, where the party might have had his remedy at law, if he had thought proper to proceed in that way."²

§ 464. Perhaps the doctrine here laid down, although generally true, is a little too broadly stated. The true source of jurisdiction in such cases, is not the mere notion of a virtual trust; for then equity jurisdiction would cover every case of bailment. But it is the necessity of reaching the facts by a discovery; and having jurisdiction for such a purpose, the court, to avoid multiplicity of suits, will proceed to administer the proper relief.³ And hence it is that in the case of a single consignment to a factory for sale, a court of equity will, under the head of discovery, entertain the suit for relief, as well as discovery; there being accounts and disbursements involved, which, generally speaking, cannot be so thoroughly investigated at law,⁴ although (as we have seen) a court of equity

¹ But see *Navulshaw v. Brownrigg*, 7 Eng. Law & Eq. 106; *Coquillard v. Suydam*, 8 Blackf. 24.

² *Scott v. Surman*, Willes, 405.

³ *Ante*, § 71; 3 Black. Comm. 437; *Ludlow v. Simond*, 2 Caines, Cas. in Err. 1, 38, 52; *Mackenzie v. Johnston*, 4 Mad. 374; *Pearce v. Green*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 135.

⁴ *Ludlow v. Simond*, 2 Caines, Cas. Err. 1, 38, 52; *Post v. Kimberly*, 9 Johns. 493; *Mackenzie v. Johnston*, 4 Mad. 374.

is cautious of entertaining suits upon a single transaction, where there are not mutual accounts.¹ Nay, so far has the doctrine been carried, that even though the case may appear, as a matter of account, to be perfectly remediable at law; yet if the parties have gone on to a hearing of the merits of the cause, without any preliminary objection being taken to the jurisdiction of the court upon this ground, the court will not then suffer it to prevail, but will administer suitable relief.²

§ 465. Cases of account between trustees and *cestuis que trust* may properly be deemed confidential agencies, and are peculiarly within the appropriate jurisdiction of courts of equity.³ The same general rules apply here, as in other cases of agency. A trustee is never permitted to make any profit to himself in any of the concerns of his trust.⁴ On the other hand, he is not liable for any

¹ Porter v. Spencer, 2 Johns. Ch. 171; Wells v. Cooper, cited 6 Ves. 136; ante, § 458. But see Coquillard v. Suydam, 8 Blackf. 25.

² Post v. Kimberly, 9 Johns. 493. [* See ante, § 74 a-74 c, where the tendency to ascribe jurisdiction in equity to the want of discovery is discussed.]

³ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 522, 523.

⁴ Docker v. Somes, 2 Mylne & Keen, 664. In this case it was decided that if a trustee mixes trust funds with his private moneys, and employs both in a trade or adventure of his own, the *cestui que trust* may, if he prefers it, insist upon having a proportionate share of the profits, instead of interest on the amount of the trust funds so employed. On this occasion Lord Brougham delivered an elaborate judgment, from which I have made the following extracts, as they strikingly exemplify the doctrine of the text. His Lordship said: "Wherever a trustee, or one standing in the relation of a trustee, violates his duty, and deals with the trust estate for his own behoof, the rule is that he shall account to the *cestui que trust* for all the gain which he has made. Thus, if trust money is laid out in buying and selling land, and a profit made by the transaction, that shall go, not to the trustee who has so applied the money, but to the *cestui que trust* whose money has been thus applied. In like manner (and cases of this kind are more numerous), where a trustee or executor has used the fund committed to his care in stock speculations, though the loss, if any, must fall upon himself; yet, for every farthing of profit he may make, he shall be accountable to the trust estate. So, if he lay out the trust money in a commercial adventure, as in buying or fitting out a vessel for a voyage, or put it in the trade of another person, from which he is to derive a certain stipulated profit, although I will not say that this has been decided, I hold it to be quite clear that he must account for the profits received by the adventure or from the concern. In all these cases, it is easy to tell what the gains are; the fund is kept distinct from the trustee's other moneys, and whatever he gets he must account for and pay over. It is so much fruit, so much increase on the estate or chattel of another, and must follow the ownership of the property, and go to the proprietor. So it is also where one not expressly a trustee, has bought or trafficked with another's money.

loss which occurs in the discharge of his duties, unless he has been guilty of negligence, malversation, or fraud.¹ The same doctrine

The law raises a trust by implication, clothing him, though a stranger, with the fiduciary character, for the purpose of making him accountable. If a person has purchased land in his own name with my money, there is a resulting trust for me; if he has invested my money in any other speculation without my consent, he is held a trustee for my benefit. And so an attorney, guardian, or other person, standing in a like situation to another, gains not for himself, but for the client, or infant, or other party, whose confidence has been abused. Such being the undeniable principle of equity, such the rule by which breach of trust is discouraged and punished, — discouraged by intercepting its gains, and thus frustrating the intentions that caused it; punished, by charging all losses on the wrong-doer, while no profit can ever accrue to him, — can the court consistently draw the line as the cases would seem to draw it, and except from the general rule those instances where the risk of the malversation is most imminent; those instances where the trustee is most likely to misappropriate; namely, those in which he uses the trust funds in his own traffic? At first sight this seems grossly absurd, and some reflection is required to understand how the court could ever, even in appearance, countenance such an anomaly. The reason which has induced judges to be satisfied with allowing interest only, I take to have been this: They could not easily sever the profits, attributable to the trust money, from those belonging to the whole capital stock; and the process became still more difficult where a great proportion of the gains proceeded from skill or labor employed upon the capital. In cases of separate appropriation there was no such difficulty; as, where land or stock had been bought and then sold again at a profit. And here, accordingly, there was no hesitation in at once making the trustee account for the whole gains he had made. But where, having engaged in some trade himself, he had invested the trust money in that trade along with his own, there was so much difficulty in severing the profits which might be supposed to come from the money misapplied from those which came from the rest of the capital embarked, that it was deemed more convenient to take another course, and instead of endeavoring to ascertain what profit had been really made, to fix upon certain rates of interest as the supposed measure or representative of the profits, and assign that to the trust estate. This principle is undoubtedly attended with one advantage; it avoids the necessity of an investigation of more or less nicety in each individual case, and it thus attains one of the important benefits resulting from all general rules. But mark what sacrifices of justice and expediency are made for this convenience. All trust estates receive the same compensation, whatever risks they may have run during the period of their misappropriation; all profit equally, whatever may be the real gain derived by the trustee from this breach of duty; nor can any amount of profit made be reached by the court, or even the most moderate rate of mercantile profit, that is the legal rate of interest, be exceeded, whatever the actual gains may have been, unless by the very clumsy and arbitrary method of allow-

¹ *Wilkinson v. Stafford*, 1 Ves. Jr. 32, 41, 42; *Shepherd v. Towgood*, 1 Turn. & R. 379; *Adair v. Shaw*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 272; *Caffrey v. Darby*, 6 Ves. 488.

is applicable to cases of guardians and wards, and other relations of a similar nature.¹

§ 466. Cases of account between tenants in common, between joint-tenants, between partners, between part-owners of ships, and

ing rests, in other words, compound interest; and this without the least regard to the profits actually realized. For, in the most remarkable case in which this method has been resorted to, *Raphael v. Boehm* (which indeed is always cited to be doubted, if not disapproved), the compound interest was given with a view to the culpability of the trustee's conduct, and not upon any estimate of the profits he had made by it. But the principal objection which I have to the rule, is founded upon its tendency to cripple the just power of this court, in by far the most wholesome, and indeed necessary exercise of its functions, and the encouragement thus held out to fraud and breach of trust. What avails it towards preventing such malversations that the contrivers of sordid injustice feel the power of the court only where they are clumsy enough to keep the gains of their dishonesty severed from the rest of their stores? It is in vain they are told of the court's arm being long enough to reach them, and strong enough to hold them, if they know that a certain delicacy of touch is required, without which the hand might as well be paralyzed or shrunk up. The distinction, I will not say sanctioned, but pointed at, by the negative authority of the cases, proclaims to executors and trustees, that they have only to invest the trust money in the speculations, and expose it to the hazards of their own commerce, and be charged 5 per cent on it; and then they may pocket 15 or 20 per cent by a successful adventure. Surely, the supposed difficulty of ascertaining the real gain made by the misapplication is as nothing compared with the mischiefs likely to arise from admitting this rule, or rather this exception to one of the most general rules of equitable jurisdiction. Even if cases were more likely to occur than I can think they are, of inextricable difficulties in pursuing such inquiries, I should still deem this the lesser evil by far, and be prepared to embrace it. Mr. Solicitor General put a case of a very plausible aspect, with the view of deterring the court from taking the course which all principle points out. He feigned the instance of an apothecary buying drugs with £100 of trust money, and earning £1,000 a year by selling them to his patients; and so he might have taken the case of trust money laid out in purchasing a piece of steel or skein of silk, and these being worked up into goods of the finest fabric, *Birmingham* trinkets or *Brussels* lace, where the work exceeds by 10,000 times the material in value. But such instances, in truth, prove nothing, for they are cases not of profits upon stock, but of skilful labor very highly paid; and no reasonable person would ever dream of charging a trustee whose skill, thus bestowed, had so enormously augmented the value of the capital, as if he had only obtained from it a profit; although the refinements of the civil law would certainly bear us out, even in charging all gains accruing upon those goods, as in the nature of accretions belonging to the true owners of the chattels." See *Wedderburn v. Wedderburn*, 4 Mylne & Craig, 41; *Clarke v. Tipping*, 9 Beavan, 284.

¹ See Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 543, 544, 545; id. p. 522, 523.

between owners of ships and the masters, fall under the like considerations. They all involve peculiar agencies, like those of bailiffs, or managers of property, and require the same operative power of discovery, and the same interposition of equity.¹ Indeed, in all cases of such joint interests, where one party receives all the profits, he is bound to account to the other parties in interest for their respective shares, deducting the proper charges and expenses; whether he acts expressly by their authority as bailiff, or only by implication as manager, without dissent, *jure domini*, over the property.²

§ 466 a. Trustees, directors of private companies, and other persons standing in a similar situation, are not only not allowed to make any profit out of their offices, but it is *primâ facie* a breach of trust on their part to take upon themselves the management of any part of the concern for a compensation or profit, by way of commission, or brokerage, or salary. Thus, for example, a director of a company created to employ steamships for the benefit of the company, cannot assume to himself, with the consent of the other directors, the situation of a ship's husband, so as to charge the ship's company for such a compensation, as a stranger acting in the same office might.³

¹ See Abbott on Shipp. B. 1, ch. 3, § 4, 10, 11, 12; *Doddington v. Hallett*, 1 Ves. 497; *Ex parte Young*, 2 Ves. & Beam. 242; Com. Dig. Chan. 3 V. 6, 2 A. 1; *Drury v. Drury*, 1 Ch. Rep. 49; *Strelly v. Winson*, 1 Vern. 297.

² *Strelly v. Winson*, 1 Vern. 297; *Horn v. Gilpin*, Ambl. 255; *Pulteney v. Warren*, 6 Ves. 73, 78. [* *Field v. Craig*, 8 Allen, 357.]

³ *Benson v. Heathorn*, 1 Younge & Coll. N. R. 326, 340, 341. In this case Mr. Vice-Chancellor Knight said: "The next point relates to the commissions and the discounts. It may be right, and probably is fair to assume, for the purpose of the argument, that all these charges and allowances to Mr. Heathorn were such as would have been according to usage, and proper in the case of a stranger. His position, however, was very different. He was one of six directors of this company, to whom exclusively the entire management of its affairs was intrusted. I say exclusively, because, as is obviously necessary in companies of this description, the shareholders in general were prohibited from interfering. These six directors being so intrusted, receive among them from the funds of the company, as a remuneration for their trouble in being the exclusively acting partners in this concern, a sum of no less than £650 per annum, capable, as I read the deed, of increase, but not liable to diminution; this sum they are to divide between themselves as they think fit. Now, it is obvious that persons so circumstanced were under an obligation to the shareholders at large to use their best exertions in all matters which related to the affairs of the company for the welfare of the concern thus intrusted, not gratuitously, to their

§ 467. In many cases of frauds by an agent, a court of common law cannot administer effectual remedies ; as, for instance, it cannot charge. I apprehend that, without any special provision for the purpose, it was by law an implied and inherent term in the engagement, that they should not make any other profit to themselves of that trust or employment, and should not acquire to themselves, while they remained directors, an interest adverse to their duty. The main or only business of this company consisted in acquiring, managing, and working steam-vessels. It may have been that a ship's husband was necessary. It is the defendant's case, or the case at least of Mr. Heathorn, that a ship's husband was necessary. This is denied on the part of the plaintiffs, who say that the directors might very well have performed such duty as the management of the vessels required without the interposition of a ship's husband. On this I gave no opinion ; but if a ship's husband was necessary, it is obvious he would become the responsible servant of the directors, in an onerous office, — that he would become an accounting party to them, and that his conduct as well as his accounts, however respectable he might be, would require a constant and vigilant superintendence and control. That constant and vigilant superintendence and control one and all of the directors had, for value, contracted to give ; and what is done ? One of these very directors becomes himself the person whose conduct and accounts it is his duty to superintend, to check, and to watch ; at once, therefore, to put the case at the very lowest, and in a manner most favorable to Mr. Heathorn, paralyzing him as director in this respect, and leaving the company, as far as these important matters were concerned, under the protection of but five, while they believed themselves to be under the protection of six. But it does not rest there. The five remaining directors were placed in the difficult and invidious position of having to check and control the accounts of one of their own body, with whom they were associated on equal terms, in the management of every other part of the affairs of the concern. It has been, nevertheless, with an appearance of seriousness, treated as an arguable question, whether I can allow this gentleman to receive profits, however reasonable in amount, if they had been claimed by another person, which he has made by this employment, in which he ought never to have embarked. If the court were to do so, if the court were to allow to a person so circumstanced that which might fairly be allowed to a stranger, it would obviously afford the strongest encouragement to a departure from what is the right and regular course in every similar establishment. A party would take a situation of this nature with the certainty of having a fair remuneration, and with the probable advantage of retaining what was unfair. It is mainly this danger, the danger of the commission of fraud in a manner and under circumstances which, in the great majority of instances, must preclude detection, that in the case of trustees and all parties whose character and responsibilities are similar (for there is no magic in the word), induces the court (not only for the sake of justice in the individual case, but for the protection of the public generally, and with a view to assert and vindicate the obligation of plain and direct dealing between man and man in all cases, but especially in those where one man is trusted by another) to adhere strictly to the rule that no profit of any description shall be made by a person so circumstanced, — saying to the person complaining, that he has thus employed

not give damages against his estate for a loss arising from his torts, when such torts die with the person; and *à fortiori*, the rule will apply to courts of equity, which do not entertain suits for damages. But, where the tort arises, in the course of an agency, from a fraud of the agent, and respects property, courts of equity will treat the loss sustained, as a debt against his estate.¹

§ 468. Courts of equity adopt very enlarged views in regard to the rights and duties of agents; and in all cases where the duty of keeping regular accounts and vouchers is imposed upon them, they will take care that the omission to do so shall not be used as a means of escaping responsibility, or of obtaining undue recompense. If, therefore, an agent does not, under such circumstances, keep regular accounts and vouchers, he will not be allowed the compensation, which otherwise would belong to his agency.² Upon similar grounds, as an agent is bound to keep the property of his principal distinct from his own, if he mixes it up with his own, the whole will be taken, both at law and in equity, to be the prop-

his time and skill without remuneration, that he has elected so to treat the matter; that he has had his reward, for he has had the possibility, nay the probability, of retaining to himself that which he never ought to have retained; that he has been willing to run the risk, and cannot complain if he happens to lose the stake. It is on this principle that Lord Eldon proceeded in the cases so familiar to us all of purchases by trustees. It is only an instance of the application of the rule, not the rule itself. In those cases Lord Eldon said (I allude particularly to *Ex parte Lacey*, 6 Ves. 627, which occurred soon after Lord Eldon first received the seal): 'The rule is founded on this, that, though you may see in a particular case that he has not made advantage, it is utterly impossible to examine upon satisfactory evidence in the power of the court, by which I mean, in the power of the parties in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, whether he has made advantage or not.' If, in the present case, Mr. Heathorn had openly and directly brought forward the matter before the body of shareholders generally, I consider it possible, if not probable, that he would have been allowed to receive, and would now have been entitled to retain, all the sums in question paid for commission. He has not elected to take that open and straightforward course; he has chosen that the matter should be undisclosed, and he must abide the inevitable result."

¹ Lord Hardwicke *v.* Vernon, 4 Ves. 418; Bishop of Winchester *v.* Knight, 1 P. Will. 406. But see *Jesus College v. Bloom*, Ambler, 55. In many cases of tort, a remedy would lie at law against the personal representative of the party; as, for instance, where a tenant has tortiously dug ore, and sold it during his lifetime; if the ore, or the proceeds of it come to the possession of his administrator or executor, or he has assets, a suit will lie at law for the same. 1 P. Will. 407. See *Jesus College v. Bloom*, Ambler, 54; *Hambley v. Trott*, Cowp. 374.

² *White v. Lady Lincoln*, 8 Ves. 363; s. p. 15 Ves. 441.

erty of the principal until the agent puts the subject-matter under such circumstances that it may be distinguished, as satisfactorily as it might have been before the unauthorized mixture on his part.¹ In other words, the agent is put to the necessity of showing clearly what part of the property belongs to him; and so far as he is unable to do this, it is treated as the property of his principal.² Courts of equity do not in these cases proceed upon the notion, that strict justice is done between the parties; but upon the ground that it is the only justice that can be done; and that it would be inequitable to suffer the fraud or negligence of the agent to prejudice the rights of his principal.³

[* § 468 a. Where a client places money in the hands of his solicitor, for investment, and the solicitor, by means of a fraud practised on another client, procures him to give a mortgage to the client leaving the money for investment, and then appropriates the money to his own use, it was held that the mortgage was not valid, in the absence of proof that the money was paid to the solicitor, as the agent of the mortgagor.⁴]

§ 469. Another head is that of APPORTIONMENT, CONTRIBUTION, and GENERAL AVERAGE, which are in some measure blended together, and require, and terminate in accounts. In most of these cases, a discovery is indispensable for the purposes of justice; and where this does not occur, there are other distinct grounds for the exercise of equity jurisdiction, in order to avoid circuitry and multiplicity of actions. Some cases of this nature spring from contract: others, again, from a legal duty, independent of contract; and others, again, from the principles of natural justice, confirming the known maxim of the law, *qui sentit commodum, sentire debet et onus*. The two latter may, therefore, properly be classed among obligations resulting *quasi ex contractu*.⁵ This will abundantly appear in the sequel of these Commentaries.⁶

¹ *Lupton v. White*, 15 Ves. 436, 440.

² *Panton v. Panton*, cited 15 Ves. 440; *Chedworth v. Edwards*, 8 Ves. 46.

³ *Lupton v. White*, 15 Ves. 441; *post*, § 623.

⁴ [* *Wall v. Cockrell*, 6 Jur. n. s. 768. But it was held by the Lord Chancellor on appeal, 7 Jur. n. s. 29, that unless the mortgagor disclaimed all liability upon the contract and took the earliest opportunity to have it set aside, his acquiescence would render it binding upon him.]

⁵ *Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea*, 1 Cox, 318; s. c. 2 Bos. & Pul. 270. See 1 *White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cas.* 60, and notes.

⁶ Mr. Chancellor Kent has, in several of his judgments, treated the subject of

§ 470. And first as to APPORTIONMENT and CONTRIBUTION, which may conveniently be treated together. Lord Coke has remarked that the word apportionment “cometh of the word *portio*, *quasi partio*, which signifieth a part of the whole, and apportion signifieth a division of a rent, common, &c., or a making of it into parts.”¹ It is sometimes used to denote the distribution of a common fund, or entire subject among all those who have a title to a portion of it.² Sometimes, indeed, in a more loose but an analogous sense, it is used to denote the contribution, which is to be made by different persons, having distinct rights, towards the discharge of a common burden or charge to be borne by all of them. In respect, then, to apportionment in its application to contracts in general, it is the known and familiar principle of the common law, that an entire contract is not apportionable. The reason seems to be, that as the contract is founded upon a consideration dependent upon the entire performance of the act, and if from any cause it is not wholly performed, the *casus fœderis* does not arise, and the law will not make provisions for exigencies which the parties have neglected to provide for themselves. Under such circumstances, it is deemed wholly immaterial to the rights of the other party, whether the non-performance has arisen from the design or negligence of the party bound to perform it, or to inevitable casualty or accident. In each case the contract has not been completely executed.³ The same rule is applied to cases where the payment is to be made

contribution, and insisted strongly that it is not necessarily founded upon contract, but upon principles of natural justice, independent of contract. See *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 409; *Stevens v. Cooper*, 1 Johns. Ch. 425; *Campbell v. Mesier*, 4 Johns. Ch. 334. In this opinion he is not only fully borne out by the doctrines of the English law (*Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea*, 1 Cox, 318; s. c. 2 Bos. & Pul. 270), but by the Roman and foreign law, which he has, with his usual ability and learning, commented upon. And he has applied it to the case of an old party-wall which divided two estates, and was necessary to be rebuilt, and was rebuilt by the owner of one, who claimed contribution from the other, and had a decree in his favor. There is a most persuasive course of reasoning used to support this judgment; but it is mainly rested upon principles of equity, derived from the civil and foreign law. See *Campbell v. Mesier*, 4 Johns. Ch. 334; s. c. 6 Johns. 21.

¹ Co. Litt. 147 b.

² *Ex parte Smyth*, 1 Swanst. 338, 339, the Reporter's note.

³ *Paradine v. Jane*, Aleyn. 26, 27; *Story on Bailments*, § 36; *Ex parte Smyth*, 1 Swanst. 338, 339, the Reporter's note, and cases cited; *ibid.* 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 9, notes (m) to (r).

under a contract upon the occurrence of a certain event or upon certain conditions. In the application of this doctrine of the common law, courts of equity have generally, but not universally adopted the maxim, *æquitas sequitur legem*.¹ Whether rightly or wrongly, it is now too late to inquire, although, as a new question, there is much doubt whether in so adopting the maxim they have not in many cases deserted the principles of natural justice and equity, as well as the analogies by which they were governed in other instances in which they have granted relief.² We have already had occasion to cite cases in which this rigid doctrine as to non-apportionment has been applied.³ There are, however, some exceptions to the rule both at law and in equity, which we shall presently have occasion to consider, and some in which courts of equity have granted relief, where it would at least be denied at law.⁴

§ 471. Some cases of apportionment in equity have already been mentioned.⁵ But at the common law, the cases are few in which an apportionment under contracts is allowed, the general doctrine being against it, unless specially stipulated by the parties. Thus, for instance, where a person was appointed collector of rents for another, and was to receive £100 per annum for his services; and he died at the end of three-quarters of the year, while in the service; it was held, that his executor could not recover £75 for the three-quarters' service, upon the ground that the contract was entire, and there could be no apportionment; for the maxim of the law is, *Annua nec debitum iudex non separat ipsum*.⁶ So, where the mate of a ship engaged for a voyage at 30 guineas for the voyage, and died during the voyage, it was held, that at law there could be no apportionment of the wages.⁷

§ 471 a. "In its familiar practical applications, the principle that an entire contract cannot be apportioned, seems founded on reasoning of this nature; that the subject of the contract, being a complex event constituted by the performance of various acts, the

¹ *Post*, § 474, 480 to 483.

² *Ibid*.

³ *Ante*, § 101 to 104.

⁴ *Post*, § 472, 473, 479.

⁵ *Ante*, § 93.

⁶ *Co. Litt.* 150 a; *Countess of Plymouth v. Throgmorton*, 1 Salk. 65; 3 Mod. 153.

⁷ *Cutter v. Powell*, 6 T. R. 320. See also *Appleby v. Dodd*, 8 East, 300; *Jesse v. Roy*, 1 Crompt., Jerv. & Rosc. 316, 329, 339.

imperfect completion of the event, by the performance of some only of those acts (as service during a portion of the specified period, navigation to an extent less than the voyage undertaken), cannot, by virtue of that contract of which it is not the subject, afford a title to the whole or to any part of the stipulated benefit. Whatever be the origin or the policy of the principle, it has, unquestionably, been established as a general rule, from the earliest period of our judicial history.¹

§ 472. Courts of equity, to a considerable extent, act, as we have seen, upon this maxim of the common law in regard to contracts. But, where equitable circumstances intervene, they will grant redress. Thus, if an apprentice-fee of a specific sum be given, and the master afterwards becomes bankrupt, equity will (as we have seen) decree an apportionment.² So, where an attorney, while he lay ill, received the sum of 120 guineas for a clerk who was placed with him, and he died within three weeks afterwards, the court decreed a return of 100 guineas, notwithstanding the articles provided, that, in case of the attorney's death, £60 only should be returned.³ This case, upon the statement in the report, is certainly open to the objection taken to it by Lord Kenyon, who said that it carried the jurisdiction of the court as far as it could be;⁴ for it overturned the maxim, *modus et conventio vincunt legem*. But, in truth, the case (according to the

¹ *Ex parte Smyth*, 1 Swanst. p. 338, note. "The following are some of the authorities by which it is enforced or qualified. Bro. Abr. Apportion. Pl. 7, 13, 22, 26; id. Contract, Pl. 8, 16, 30, 31, 35; id. Laborers, Pl. 48, 10 H. 6, 23; 3 Vin. Abr. 8, 9; Finch Law, Lib. 2, ch. 18; Countess of Plymouth v. Throgmorton, 1 Salk. 65; Tyrie v. Fletcher, Cowp. 666; Robinson v. Bland, 2 Burr. 1077; 1 Bl. 234; Loraine v. Thomlinson, Doug. 585; Bermon v. Woodbridge, Doug. 781; Rothwell v. Cook, 1 B. & P. 172; Meyer v. Gregson, Marsh. on Insurance, 658; Chater v. Becket, 7 T. R. 201; Cook v. Jennings, 7 T. R. 381; Cutter v. Powell, 6 T. R. 320; Wiggins v. Ingleton, Lord Raym. 1211; Cook v. Tombs, 2 Anstr. 420; Lea v. Barber, 2 Anst. 425, n; Mulloy v. Backer, 5 East, 316; Liddard v. Lopes, 10 East, 526; How v. Synge, 15 East, 440; Fuller v. Abbott, 4 Taunt. 105; Stevenson v. Snow, 3 Burr. 1237; Long v. Allen, Marsh. on Insurance, 660; Park on Insurance, 529; Ritchie v. Atkinson, 10 East, 295; Waddington v. Oliver, 2 N. R. 61. And see Abbott's Law of Merchant Ships, p. 292, *et seq.*"

² *Ante*, § 93; Hale v. Webb, 2 Bro. Ch. 78; *Ex parte Sandby*, 1 Atk. 149; Hirst v. Tolson, 13 Jurist, 596.

³ Newton v. Rowse, 1 Vern. 460, and Raithby's note (2).

⁴ Hale v. Webb, 2 Bro. Ch. 80; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 8, note (g).

Register's Book) seems to have been very correctly decided ; for in the pleadings it was stated, that the plaintiff at the time was unwilling to sign the articles, or to pay the 120 guineas, until the attorney had declared, that in case he should not live to go abroad, the 120 guineas should be returned to him, and that he was only troubled with a cold, and hoped to be abroad in two or three days ; and thereupon the plaintiff signed the articles.¹ This allegation was, in all probability, proved, and was the very turning-point of the case. If so, the case stands upon a plain ground of equity, that of mutual mistake, or misrepresentation, or unconscientious advantage. [* One would suppose that this case turned solely upon the ground of a fraudulent misrepresentation. For that is the only ground upon which the court could have departed from the express words of the contract ; and, in that view, the proper decree would have been a return of the whole sum paid. So that the case affords rather an imperfect illustration of the doctrine of apportionment.]

§ 473. Other cases of apprentice-fees may exemplify the same salutary interposition of courts of equity. Thus, where an apprentice had been discharged from service, in consequence of the misconduct of the master, it was decreed that the indentures of apprenticeship should be delivered up, and a part of the apprentice-fee paid back.² So, where the master undertook in consideration of the apprentice-fee, to do certain acts during the apprenticeship, which by his death were left undone and could not be performed, an apportionment of the apprentice-fee was decreed.³

[* § 473 *a*. But the mere refusal of the master to allow his apprentice to work, although improper and without excuse, is not sufficient ground for a court of equity to decree the cancellation of the articles of apprenticeship and a return of the premium. The appropriate remedy in such case is by an action at law for damages.⁴ And it was here held that the case of *Therman v. Abell*,⁵ where it was held that a "tradesman who turns away his apprentice for negligence and misdemeanors, shall be decreed to refund part of the money he had with him," is not sound law ;

¹ Mr. Raithby's note to 1 Vern. 460 ; *ante*, § 93.

² *Lockley v. Eldridge*, Rep. Temp. Finch. 128. See *Therman v. Abell*, 2 Vern. 64.

³ *Savin v. Bowdin*, Rep. Temp. Finch, 396.

⁴ [* *Webb v. England*, 7 Jur. n. s. 153.

⁵ 2 Vernon, 64.

but that the case of *Argles v. Heasemen*,¹ where the “apprentice quitted his master on being misused, and the court refused to enjoin a suit at law by the master upon the bond for faithful service,” was to be followed.]

§ 474. These are cases where an apportionment might not always be reached at the common law; but yet, which belong to the recognized principles of equity. But, on the other hand, where an apprentice-fee has been paid, and the apprenticeship has been dissolved at the request of the friends of the apprentice, but without any default in the master, and without any agreement for a return of any part of the fee, there a court of equity will not interfere, for there is no equity attaching itself to the transaction, and the contract does not import any return.²

§ 475. In regard to rents, the general rule at the common law leaned strongly against any apportionment thereof. Hence it was well established, that, in case of the death of a tenant for life, in the interval between two periods, at each of which a portion of rent becomes due from the lessee, no rent could be recovered for the occupation since the first of these periods.³ The rule seems to have been rested on two propositions: 1st. That the entire contract cannot be apportioned. 2d. That under a lease with a periodical reservation of rent, the contract for the payment of such portion is distinct and entire.⁴ Hence it followed, that, on the determination of a lease by the death of the lessor before the day appointed for the payment of the rent, the event, on the completion of which the payment was stipulated, namely, occupation of the lands during the period stipulated, never occurring, no rent became payable, and in respect of time, apportionment was not in any case permitted.⁵

§ 475 a. Some exceptions and some qualifications were, however, in certain cases and under certain circumstances, incorporated into the common law at an early period, in respect to rent growing out of real estate, where there was a division or severance of the land from which the rent issued. In other cases, the rent was held to be wholly extinguished. A few examples of each sort may perhaps be usefully introduced in this place; but the

¹ 1 Atk. 518.]

² *Hale v. Webb*, 2 Bro. Ch. 78; *Hirst v. Tolson*, 13 Jurist, 596.

³ *Ex parte Smyth*, 1 Swanst. 338, and note.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*; *Clun's case*, 10 Co. 127.

full examination of the whole subject properly belongs to another department of the law.¹ Thus, for instance, if a man had a rent-charge, and purchased a part of the land, out of which it issued, the whole rent-charge was extinguished.² But, if a part of the land came to him by operation of law, as by descent, then the rent-charge was apportionable; that is, the tenant and the heir were to pay according to the value of the lands respectively held by them; and, of course, the part apportionable on the heir was extinguished.³ But a rent-service was in both cases apportionable.⁴ So, if a lessor granted part of a reversion to a stranger, the rent was to be apportioned.⁵ On the other hand, if part of the land out of which a rent-charge issued, was evicted by a title paramount, the rent was apportioned.⁶ So, although a rent-charge is in its nature entire and against common right, yet if it descended to coparceners by this rule of law, the rent was apportioned between them, and the tenant was subject to several distresses for the rent, and partition might be made before seisin of the rent.⁷ So a rent-service incident to the reversion might be apportionable by a grant of a part of the reversion.⁸

§ 475 *b*. "In some cases a rent-charge may be apportioned by the act of the party; as, if the grantee releases part of his rent to the tenant of the land, such release does not extinguish the whole

¹ Co. Litt. 148 *a*; Com. Dig. *Suspension*, R. 6, D. 4; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 9, and notes; Bac. Abridg. *Rent*, M.; Com. Dig. *Chancery*, 4 N. 5, 2 E.; *Ex parte Smyth*, 1 Swanst. 338, 339, the Reporter's note.

² Co. Litt. 147 *b*, 148 *a*, 148 *b*; Bac. Abr. *Rent*, M.: Com. Dig. *Suspension*, C. See also *Averall v. Wade*, 1 Lloyd & Goold, 252, and the Reporter's note, p. 264, 265. But see 1 Swanston, 338, note (*a*). Mr. Swanston, in his note (*a*) to *Ex parte Smyth*, 1 Swanst. 338, says: "Apportionment frequently denotes, not division, but distribution: and in its ordinary technical sense, the distribution of one subject, in proportion to another previously distributed." There is some reason to question the accuracy of this statement. Apportionment does not refer to a distribution of one subject, in proportion to another "previously distributed," but a distribution of a claim or charge among persons having different interests or shares, in proportion to their interest or shares in the subject-matter to which it attaches.

³ Co. Litt. 149 *b*; Bac. Abridg. *Rent*, M.; Com. Dig. *Suspension*, C.

⁴ *Ibid.*; Com. Dig. *Suspension*, E.

⁵ Co. Litt. 148 *a*; Com. Dig. *Suspension*, E.; *Ewer v. Moyle*, Cro. Eliz. 771; Bac. Abr. *Rent*, M. 1.

⁶ Com. Dig. *Suspension*, E.; Co. Litt. 147 *b*; Bac. Abr. *Rent*, M. 1, 2.

⁷ Co. Litt. 164 *b*.

⁸ Bac. Abridg. *Rent*, M. 1.

rent. So, if the grantee gives part of it to a stranger, and the tenant attorns, such grant shall not extinguish the residue, which the grantee never parted with, because such release or disposition makes no alteration in the original grant, nor defeats the intention of it, as the purchase of part of the land does; for the whole rent is still issuable out of the whole land, according to the original intention of the grant. Besides, since the law allowed of such sorts of grants, and thereby established such sort of property, it would have been unreasonable and severe to hinder the proprietor to make a proper distribution of it for the promotion of his children, or to provide for the contingencies of his family, which were in his view. The objection that has been made to these sorts of apportionments or division of rent-charges is this, that the tenant thereby would be exposed to several suits and distresses for a thing, which in its original creation was entire and recoverable upon one avowry.”¹

§ 475 c. And the question may also arise, “Whether the tenant shall pay the whole rent, though part of the thing demised be lost and of no profit to him, or though the use of the whole be for some time intercepted or taken away without his default. And here it seems extremely reasonable, that, if the use of the thing be entirely lost or taken away from the tenant, the rent ought to be abated or apportioned, because the title to the rent is founded upon this presumption, that the tenant enjoys the thing during the contract; and, therefore, if part of the land be surrounded or covered with the sea, this being the act of God, the tenant shall not suffer by it, because the tenant without his default wants the enjoyment of part of the thing, which was the consideration of his paying the rent; nor has the lessor reason to complain, because, if the land had been in his own hands, he must have lost the benefit of so much as the sea had covered.”²

§ 476. However reasonable an apportionment may seem to be in the case last suggested upon the ground that the tenant had not, by reason of inevitable casualty, enjoyed the full benefit of the lands demised to him, the same principle was not, at the common law, carried out in favor of the lessor, in case the lease by

¹ Ibid.

² Bac. Abridg. *Rent*, M. 2. The passage is here given as it stands in Bacon's Abridgment. But whether the doctrine therein stated would now be supported, may perhaps admit of a doubt. See *ante*, § 101 to 104.

inevitable casualty determined before the entire rent was due. For, in such a case, the rule was inflexibly applied, that the rent should not be apportioned. If, therefore, the lease be determined by the death of the lessor (he having but a life-estate in the land demised), before the day appointed for the payment of the rent, the event on which that payment was stipulated, namely, the occupation of the land demised, during the period specified, no rent whatsoever was payable by the tenant, even although he had occupied the land up to a single day of the time when the rent would have become due, for no apportionment in respect to time was, in any case, admitted by the common law. The executor of the deceased was not entitled to any rent, because the contract was not completely performed; the remainder-man, or reversioner, was not entitled, because the rent was not due in his time.¹ And this severe doctrine of the common law, artificial and unjust as it seems to be, was, as we shall presently see, scrupulously followed in equity. It was to cure this manifest defect, that the statute of 11 Geo. II. (ch. 19, § 15) was passed, and the like remedial justice has been still more amply provided for by the statute of 4 and 5 Will. IV. ch. 22.

¹ Clun's case, 10 Co. 127. The principal reason there given is, "Because the rent reserved is to be raised out of the profits of the land, and is not due until the profits are taken by the lessee: for these words *reddendo inde*, or *reservando inde*, is as much as to say, that the lessee shall pay so much of the issues and profits at such days to the lessor, for *reddere inde nihil aliud est quam acceptum restituere, seu reddere est quasi retro dare*, and *redditus dicitur, a reddendo, quia retro it, sc.* to the lessor, donor, &c., *sicut provent, a proveniendo*; and *obventus ab obveniundo*. And that is the reason that the rent so reserved is not due or payable before the day of payment incurred, because it is to be rendered and restored out of the issues and profits; and that is the reason, that if the land is evicted, or if the lease determined before the legal time of payment, no rent shall be paid, for there shall never be an apportionment in respect of part of the time, as there shall be upon an eviction of part of the land; and, therefore, if tenant for life makes a lease for years, rendering rent at the feast of Easter, and the lessee occupies for three-quarters of the year, and in the last quarter before the feast of Easter the tenant for life dies, here shall be no apportionment of the rent for three-quarters of the year, because no rent was due till the feast of Easter, and no apportionment shall be in respect of time; but in the same case, if part of the land had been evicted before the feast of Easter, and the feast of Easter occurred in the life of the lessor, there shall be an apportionment of the rent, but not in respect of the time which well continued, but in respect that parcel of the land leased is evicted." 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 90, note (o); *Ex parte Smyth*, 1 Swanst. 338, and the Reporter's note; Bissett on Estates for Life, ch. 11, p. 268 to 272.

§ 477. On the other hand, cases may easily be stated where apportionment of a common charge, or, more properly speaking, where contribution towards a common charge seems indispensable for the purposes of justice, and accordingly has been declared by the common law in the nature of an apportionment towards the discharge of a common burden. Thus, if a man, owning several acres of land, is bound in a judgment or statute or recognizance operating as a lien on the land, and afterwards he alienes one acre to A., another to B., and another to C., &c.; there, if one alienee is compelled in order to save his land to pay the judgment, statute, or recognizance, he will be entitled to contribution from the other alienees.¹ The same principle will apply in the like case, where the land descends to parceners who make partition; and then, one is compelled to pay the whole charge; contribution will lie against the other parceners.² The same doctrine will apply to co-feoffees of the land, or of different parts of the land.³ In all these cases (and others might be mentioned), a writ of contribution would lie at the common law, or in virtue of the statute of Marlebridge.⁴

¹ Harbert's case, 3 Co. 12, 13; Viner's Abridg. Contribution and Average, A. pl. 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 25, 27. See also American Law Mag. for April, 1844, art. 5, p. 64 to 82. But see *post*, § 1233 *a*, where the subject is discussed in another connection, and the authorities are shown to be not in harmony on the subject.

² *Ibid.*; Viner's Abridg. Contribution and Average, A. pl. 6, 7, 9, 22, 23, 24.

³ *Ibid.*; Harbert's case, 3 Co. 12; *Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea*, 1 Cox, 321; s. c. 2 Bos. & Pull. 276; *ante*, § 499, and note.

⁴ See Harbert's case, 3 Co. 12; *Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea*, 1 Cox, 321; s. c. 2 Bos. & Pull. 270; Co. Litt. 165 *a*; *Fitzherbert Nat. Brev.* 16. Lord Chief Baron Eyre, in one of his most luminous judgments, has expounded the general grounds of the doctrine of contribution, as known at the common law, as well as in equity, in a manner so clear that it will be better to quote his own language than to risk impairing its force by any abridgment. "If we take a view," said he, "of the cases, both in law and equity, we shall find that contribution is bottomed and fixed on general principles of justice, and does not spring from contract; though contract may qualify it, as in *Swain v. Wall*, 1 Ch. Rep. 149. In the Register, p. 176 (*b*), there are two writs of contribution, one *inter co-hæredes*, the other *inter co-feoffatos*. These are founded on the statute of Marlebridge. The great object of the statute is, to protect the inheritance from more suits than are necessary. Though contribution is a part of the provision of the statute, yet, in *Fitz. N. B.* 338, there is a writ of contribution at common law amongst tenants in common, as for a mill falling to decay. In the same page *Fitzherbert* takes notice of contribution between co-heirs and co-feoffees; and, as between co-feoffees, he supposes there shall be no contribution without an agreement. And the words of the writ countenance such an idea; for the words are,

§ 478. But there are many difficulties in proceeding in cases where an apportionment or contribution is allowed at the common law; for, where the parties are numerous, as each is liable to contribute only for his own portion, separate actions and verdicts may become necessary against each. And thus a multiplicity of suits may take place; and no judgment in one suit will be conclusive in regard to the amount of contribution, in a suit against another person. The like difficulty may arise in cases where an apportionment is to be made under a contract for the payment of money or rent, where the parties are numerous and the circumstances complicated. Whereas, in equity, all parties can at once be brought before the court in a single suit; and the decree apportioning the rent will thus be conclusive upon all the parties in interest.¹

§ 479. But the ground of equity jurisdiction, in cases of apportionment of rent and other charges and claims, does not arise solely from the defective nature of the remedy at common law, where such a remedy exists. It extends to a great variety of cases where no remedy at all exists in law, and yet where *ex æquo et bono*, the party is entitled to relief.² Thus, for instance, where a plaintiff was lessee of divers lands, upon which an entire rent was reserved, and afterwards the inhabitants of the town, where part of the lands lay, claimed a right of common in part

'*ex eorum assensu*;' and yet this seems to contravene the express provision of the statute. As to co-heirs the statute is express; it does not say so as to co-tenants; but it gives contribution in the same manner. In Sir William Harbert's case, 3 Co. 11 (*b*), many cases of contribution are put; and the reason given in the books is, that *in æquali jure* the law requires equality. One shall not bear the burden in ease of the rest; and the law is grounded in great equity. Contract is never mentioned. Now, the doctrine of equality operates more effectually in this court than in a court of law. The difficulty in Coke's cases was, how to make them contribute. They were put to their *audita querela* or *scire facias*. In equity, there is a string of cases in 1 Eq. Cas. Abr. tit. Contribution and Average. Another case occurs in Hargrave's Law Tracts on the right of the King on the prisage of wine. The King is entitled to one ton before the mast, and one ton behind; and in that case a right of contribution accrues; for the King may take by his prerogative any two tons of wine he thinks fit, by which one man might suffer solely. But the contribution is given, of course, on general principles, which govern all these cases." Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea, 1 Cox, 321; s. c. 2 Bos. & Pull. 270, 271, 272; Lord Redesdale in Stirling v. Forrester, 3 Bligh, 596, O. S.

¹ *Post*, § 483 to 488.

² *Ante*, § 472, 473.

of the lands so let, and upon a trial, succeeded in establishing their right; in this case there could be no apportionment of the rent at law, because, although a right of common was recovered, there was no eviction of the land. But it was not doubted that in equity a bill was maintainable for an apportionment, if a suitable case for relief were made out.¹ So, where by an ancient composition, a rent is payable in lieu of tithes, and the lands come into the seisin and possession of divers grantees, the composition will be apportioned among them in equity, though there may be no redress at law.² So, where money is to be laid out in land, if the party who is entitled to the land in fee, when purchased, dies before it is purchased, the money being in the mean time secured on a mortgage, and the interest made payable half-yearly, the interest will be apportioned in equity between the heir and the administrator of the party so entitled, if he dies before the half-yearly payment is due.³ So, where portions are payable to daughters at eighteen or marriage, and, until the portions are due, maintenance is to be allowed, payable half-yearly at specific times, if one of the daughters should come of age in an intermediate period, the maintenance will be apportioned in equity.⁴

§ 480. But still there are many cases in which courts of equity have refused to allow an apportionment of rent and other charges, acting (it must be admitted), not upon the principles which ordinarily govern them, but upon the notion of a strict obedience to the analogies of the law. Thus, where a purchaser of an interest in New South Sea Annuities from a husband during his life, remainder to other persons (which had been originally secured upon a mortgage, but by order of the court had been transferred to government securities), insisted, in a petition in equity, that, notwithstanding the husband died before the Christmas half-year became due, yet he was entitled to be paid proportionally for the time the husband lived; Lord Hardwicke said, that if it had continued a mortgage, the purchaser would have been entitled to the demand he now made, because there, interest accrues every day

¹ Com. Dig. Chancery, 2 E., 4 N. 9; *Jew v. Thirkenell*, 1 Ch. Cas. 31; s. c. 3 Ch. Rep. 11.

² Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 N. 5, cites *Saville*, 5. See *Aynsley v. Woodsworth*, 2 V. & Beam. 331.

³ *Edwards v. Countess of Warwick*, 2 P. Will. 176.

⁴ *Hay v. Palmer*, 2 P. Will. 501. See also *ante*, § 472. 473.

for the forbearance of the principal, though, notwithstanding, it is usual in mortgages to make it payable half-yearly. But, that South Sea Annuities are considered as mere annuities; and, therefore, the purchaser is no more entitled than he would be in case of a common annuity payable half-yearly, where the annuitant, in whose place he stands, dies before the half-year is completed.¹ This is certainly correct reasoning upon the course of the authorities; and yet it is difficult to see, why, in reason, interest payable half-yearly should stand distinguished from an annuity payable half-yearly. Why, in such case, may not portions of the annuity be deemed in equity to accrue daily, as much as interest, when the latter is, like the former, payable only half-yearly? The same principle has been adopted in cases where money is to be laid out in land upon a settlement, and in the mean time to be invested in government securities; if the tenant for life dies in the middle of the half-year, the reversioner is entitled to the whole dividend, and there is no apportionment; although there would be if the money were laid out on mortgage.²

¹ Pearly v. Smith, 3 Atk. 261; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 9, note (o); Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3 Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 520, 521, 522.

² Sherrard v. Sherrard, 3 Atk. 502; Rashleigh v. Master, 3 Bro. Ch. 99, 101; Webb v. Shaftesbury, 11 Ves. 361; Wilson v. Harman, Ambl. 279; s. c. 2 Ves. 672; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 9, note (o); Hay v. Palmer, 2 P. Will. 502, and Mr. Cox's note. See also *ante*, § 479. Mr. Swanston, in his learned note to the case of *Ex parte Smyth*, 1 Swanst. 338, 348, says: "The rule of law which refuses apportionment of rent in respect of time, is applicable to all periodical payments becoming due at fixed intervals; not to sums accruing *de die in diem*. Annuities, therefore (3 Atk. 261; 2 Bl. 1016), and dividends on money in the funds, are not apportionable. *Rashleigh v. Master*, 3 Bro. C. C. 101; *Wilson v. Harman*, 2 Ves. 672; *Amb. 279*; *Pearly v. Smith*, 3 Atk. 260; *Sherrard v. Sherrard*, 3 Atk. 502. But interest, whether the principal is secured by mortgage (*Wilson v. Harman*, *Sherrard v. Sherrard*), or by bond, notwithstanding that it is expressly made payable half-yearly (*Banner v. Lowe*, 13 Ves. 135), may be apportioned: for, though reserued at fixed periods, it becomes due *de die in diem* for forbearance of the principal, which the creditor is entitled to recall at pleasure. Thus a sum of money, which it was covenanted in marriage-articles should be invested in lands, having been lent on mortgage, at the death of the person entitled to an estate tail in the land, the interest was apportioned in favor of his administratrix. *Edwards v. Countess of Warwick*, 2 P. Will. 176; 1 Bro. P. C. ed. Toml. 207. In strictness these are not cases of apportionment (2 P. W. ed. Cox, 503, n. 1); they are not instances of the distribution of one entire subject among individuals entitled each to a part, but the appropriation of distinct subjects to the respective owners. A remarkable exception to the general rule has been

§ 481. So, where a tenant for life made a lease of the estate for years, rendering rent quarter-yearly, and died before the end of the quarter, an apportionment of the rent was denied in equity.¹ Upon this occasion the Lord Chancellor said: "There are several remedial statutes relating to rents;² but this is a *casus omissus*. The law does

introduced in the instance of annuities for the maintenance of infants (*Hay v. Palmer*, 2 P. Will. 501; *Rhenish v. Martin*, 1746, M. S.; *Sheppard v. Wilson*, 4 Hare, 395), or of married women living separate from their husbands (*Howel v. Hanforth*, 2 Bl. 1016; 1 Schoales & Lefr. 303); an exception supported by the necessity of the case, and the consequent presumption of intention (2 Bl. 1017; 2 P. W. 303), and therefore not extending to an annuity for the separate use of a married woman, living with her husband and maintained by him. *Anderson v. Dwyer*, 1 Schoales & Lefr. 301. An annuity, payable quarterly, secured by the bond of a testator whose will charged his real, in aid of his personal, estate, being, under an order of the Court of Chancery, directed to be paid half-yearly, at Midsummer and Christmas, and the annuitant having died between Lady-Day and Midsummer, her representative was declared entitled to the arrears due at Lady-Day. *Webb v. Lady Shaftesbury*, 11 Ves. 361.

¹ *Jenner v. Morgan*, 1 P. Will. 392; *ante*, § 476.

² Before the statute of 11 George II. ch. 19, § 15, if a tenant for life died before the rent day, the intermediate rent was lost. That statute has cured many hardships of the common law on this subject, but not all. *Paget v. Gee*, *Ambler*, 198; s. c. *id.* App. p. 807 (Mr. Blunt's edition); *Wykham v. Wykham*, 3 Taunt. 331. The recent statute of 4 & 5 William, ch. 22, has extended the like remedial justice to other analogous cases. *Ante*, § 476. It declares, that all rent reserved and made payable in leases, which determine on the death of the person making them, or on the death of the life or lives, for which such person was entitled to the lands demised, shall be within the provisions of the statute of 11 George II. ch. 19. It also declares, that all rent-service reserved in any lease by a tenant in fee, or for any life-interest, or by any lease granted under any power, and all rent-charge and other rents, annuities, pensions, dividends, moduses, compositions, and all other payments of every other description, made payable or coming due at a fixed period, shall be apportioned so, and in such manner, that on the death of any person interested therein, &c., &c., or on the determination by any other means whatsoever of the interest of any such person, he or she, and his or her executors, administrators, and assigns, shall be entitled to a proportion of such rents and other payments. In the construction of this statute, it has been held that it applies to cases in which the interest of the person interested in such rents and payments is terminated by his death, or by the death of another person; but that it does not apply to the case of a tenant in fee, nor provide for apportionment of rent between the real and personal representatives of such person whose interest is not terminated by his death. *Brown v. Amyott*, 3 Hare, 173; *Beer v. Beer*, 9 Eng. Law & Eq. 468. See also *Ex parte Smyth*, 1 Swanston, 337, 338, and Mr. Swanston's learned note, *ibid.*, where the principal cases are commented on at large. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 9, and notes; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 519, 520, 521, 522.

not apportion rent in point of time, and I do not know that equity ever did it.¹ This is an accident which the judgment creditor (the plaintiff) might have guarded against by receiving the rent weekly; so that it is his fault, and becomes a gift in law to the tenant."² And yet, if the tenant had actually paid the whole rent to the remainder-man, including this period, from a conscientious sense of duty, the party might, under such circumstances, have been entitled to his share *pro rata*. At least, in the case where a tenant in tail made a lease, but not according to the statute, and died without issue between the days of payment, and afterwards the remainder-man received the whole rents, Lord Hardwicke decreed that the executors of the tenant were entitled against him to an apportionment, although, in strictness, the tenant could not have been compelled to pay it.³

§ 482. The distinction between this case and the former case is extremely thin; and the reasons given for it are rather ingenious and subtle than satisfactory. If it would not be unconscientious for the tenant to withhold the rent, because the executor of the tenant for life had no equity, it is difficult to perceive that there can spring up any equity against the remainder-man, unless the tenant paid the rent with an express understanding that there should be an apportionment, which can hardly be pretended to have been proved in the cases on this point.⁴ It would have been, perhaps, more consonant to the general principles of courts of equity, to have decided that, as the tenant held his lease upon the terms of a compensatory contract, it was against conscience that he should be at liberty to treat the rent, under any circumstances of an involuntary departure from the terms of the lease, as a gift;⁵

¹ In *Meeley v. Webber*, cited 2 Eq. Abridg. 704, where a person leased his tithes at a rent payable at Michaelmas, and died in September, the court decreed an apportionment. There is much good sense in the decision. See also *Aynsley v. Woodsworth*, 2 V. & Beam. 331.

² *Jenner v. Morgan*, 1 P. Will. 392. See *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 519, 520, 521.*

³ *Paget v. Gee*, Ambl. 196; s. c. App. (Mr. Blunt's edition) p. 807; *Ex parte Smyth*, 1 Swanst. 337, and note; id. 355, 356; *Aynsley v. Woodsworth*, 2 V. & Beam. 331; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 520.*

⁴ See *Hawkins v. Kelly*, 8 Ves. 308 to 312; *Ex parte Smyth*, 1 Swanst. 346, 347, 348, note.

⁵ See *Vernon v. Vernon*, 2 Bro. Ch. 659, 662. Lord Thurlow seems to have proceeded upon a principle somewhat like this in *Vernon v. Vernon* (2 Bro. Ch.

and that, as the parties had omitted to provide in their contract for the exigency, equity would presume an intention of the parties to treat the rent as accruing, *pro tanto*, from day to day; and as a *debitum in præsentī solvendum in futuro*. Lord Hardwicke, on one occasion, in discussing a question of apportionment, after quoting the maxim, *Æquitas sequitur legem*, added: "When the court finds the rules of law right, it will follow them; but then it will likewise go beyond them."¹

§ 483. But a far more important and beneficial exercise of equity jurisdiction, in cases of apportionment and contribution, is, when encumbrances, fines, and other charges on real estate are required to be paid off, or are actually paid off by some of the parties in interest.² This subject has already come incidentally under our notice,³ but it requires a more ample examination in this place. In most cases of this sort, there is no remedy at law, from the extreme uncertainty of ascertaining the relative proportions, which different persons, having interests of a very different nature, quality, and duration, in the subject-matter, ought to pay. And, when there is a remedy, it is inconvenient and imperfect, because it involves

659, 662), holding that where a person was a tenant from year to year, or a tenant at will under a tenant in tail, the demises being determinable at his death, and he dying before the half-year expired, the rent should be apportioned between the representatives of the tenant in tail and the remainder-man. His lordship said: "That the tenant holding from year to year, or period to period, from a guardian, without lease or covenant, cannot be allowed to raise an implication in his own favor, that he should hold without paying rent to anybody." See *Hawkins v. Kelly*, 8 Ves. 312; *Ex parte Smyth*, 1 Swanst. 337, and *ibid.*, Mr. Swanston's learned note; *Clarkson v. Earl of Scarborough*, cited 1 Swanston, 354, note (a). [* Where the tenant for life had paid the expenses of renewal of the lease for another term and died before the term expired, it was held that the proportion to be paid by the remainder-man of the fine and expenses of renewal was to be ascertained by reference to the actual enjoyment of the tenant for life, and compound interest to be computed upon the portion attributable to the remainder-man until the death of the tenant for life, and simple interest from that time until payment. *Bradford v. Brownjohn*, Law Rep. 3 Ch. App. 711. See also *Cox v. Cox*, Law Rep. 8 Eq. 343; *Adhusen v. Whittell*, Law Rep. 4 Eq. 295.]

¹ *Paget v. Gee*, Ambler, App. p. 810 (Mr. Blunt's edition).

² Com. Dig. Chancery, 2 J., 2 S.; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 9, and notes; *Ritson v. Brunlow*, 1 Ch. 91; *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 409; *Scribner v. Hickok*, 4 Johns. Ch. 530; *Averall v. Wade, Lloyd & Gould*, 252, and the Reporter's note, 264, 265, 266.

³ *Ante*, § 477.

multiplicity of suits, and opens the whole matter for contestation anew in every successive litigation.¹

§ 484. The subject may be illustrated by one of the most common cases, that of an apportionment and contribution towards a mortgage upon an estate, where the interest is required to be kept down, or the encumbrance to be paid. Let us suppose a case where different parcels of land are included in the same mortgage, and these different parcels are afterwards sold to different purchasers, each holding in fee and severalty the parcel sold to himself. In such a case, each purchaser is bound to contribute to the discharge of the common burden or charge, in proportion to the value which his parcel bears to the whole included in the mortgage.² But to ascertain the relative values of each, is a matter of great nicety and difficulty; and unless all the different purchasers are joined in a single suit, as they can be in equity, although not at law, the most serious embarrassments may arise in fixing the proportion of each purchaser, and in making it conclusive upon all others.

§ 485. So, if there are different persons having different interests in an estate under mortgage, as, for instance, parceners,³ tenants for life or in tail, remainder-men, tenants in dower or for a term of years, or for other limited interests, it is obvious that the question of apportionment and contribution in redeeming the mortgage, as well as in payment of interest, may involve the most important and intricate inquiries; and to do entire justice, it may be indispensable that all the parties in interest should actually be brought before the court. Now, in a suit at the common law, this is absolutely impossible; for no persons can be made parties, except those whose interest is joint, and of the same nature and character, and is immediate and vested in possession. So that a resort to a court of equity, where all these interests can be brought before the court, and definitely ascertained and disposed of, is indispensable. If to this we add, that in most cases of mortgage, an account of what has been paid upon the mortgage, either by direct payments or by perception of the rents and profits of the

¹ *Ante*, § 477, 478.

² *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 409, 415; *Stevens v. Cooper*, 1 Johns. Ch. 425; *Harris v. Ingledew*, 3 P. Will. 98, 99; *Harbert's case*, 3 Co. 14; *Taylor v. Porter*, 7 Mass. 355. [* But see *post*, § 1233 *a.*]

³ *Stirling v. Forrester*, 3 Bligh, 590, 596.

estate, it is necessary to be taken; we shall at once see that the machinery of a court of common law is very ill adapted to any such purpose. But if we add, further, to all this, that there may be mesne encumbrances and other cross equities between some of the parties, all of which are required to be adjusted, in order to arrive at a just result, and to attain the full end of the law by closing up all future litigation, we shall not fail to be convinced, that the only appropriate, adequate, and effectual remedy must be administered in equity. Indeed, from its very nature, as we shall have occasion to see fully hereafter, the jurisdiction over mortgages belongs peculiarly and exclusively to courts of equity. And wherever, as is the case in some of the American States, an attempt has been made to ingraft the remedy of redemption upon the ordinary processes of courts of law, it has been found to be inconvenient, embarrassing, and, in complicated cases, impracticable.

§ 486. Very delicate, and often very intricate, questions arise, in the adjustment of the rights and duties of the different parties in interest in the inheritance. In the first place, in regard to the paying off of encumbrances. If a tenant in tail in possession pays off an encumbrance, it will ordinarily be treated as extinguished; and the remainder-man cannot be called upon for contribution, unless the tenant in tail has kept alive the encumbrance, or preserved the benefit of it to himself by some suitable assignment, or has done some other act or thing, which imports a positive intention to hold himself out as a creditor of the estate, in lieu of the mortgagee. The reason for this doctrine is, that a tenant in tail can, if he pleases, by fine or recovery, become the absolute owner of the estate; and, therefore, his discharge of encumbrances is treated, as made in the character of owner, unless he clearly shows that he intends to discharge them and become a creditor thereby.¹ But the like doctrine does not apply to a tenant in tail in remainder, whose estate may be altogether defeated by the birth of issue of another person; for it must be inferred that such a tenant in tail, in paying off an encumbrance without

¹ *Wigsell v. Wigsell*, 2 Sim. & Stu. 364; *Jones v. Morgan*, 1 Bro. Ch. 206; *Kirkham v. Smith*, 1 Ves. 258; *Amesbury v. Brown*, 1 Ves. 477; *Shrewsbury v. Shrewsbury*, 3 Bro. Ch. 120; s. c. 1 Ves. Jr. 227; *St. Paul v. Viscount Dudley and Ward*, 15 Ves. 173; *Faulkner v. Daniel*, 3 Hare, 199, 217.

an assignment, means to keep the charge alive.¹ *A fortiori*, the doctrine would not apply to the case of a tenant for life paying off an encumbrance; for, if he should pay it off without taking an assignment, he would be deemed to be a creditor to the amount paid, upon the ground that there can be no presumption that, with his limited interest, he could intend to exonerate the estate.² He cannot be presumed, *prima facie*, to discharge the estate from the debt; for that would be to discharge the estate of another person from the debt. But, in both cases, the presumption may be rebutted by circumstances, which demonstrate a contrary intention.³

§ 487. In respect to the discharge of encumbrances, it was formerly a rule in equity, that the tenant for life and the reversioner, or remainder-man, were bound to contribute towards the payment of encumbrances, in a positive proportion, fixed by the court; so that they paid a gross sum, in proportion to their interests in the estate. The usual proportion was, for the tenant for life to pay one-third, and the remainder-man or reversioner to pay two-thirds of the charge.⁴ A similar rule was applied to cases of fines paid upon the renewal of leases.⁵ But the rule is now, in both cases entirely exploded in England; and a far more reasonable rule is adopted. It is this: that the tenant shall contribute beyond the interest, in proportion to the benefit he derives from the liquidation of the debt, and the consequent cessation of annual payments of interest during his life (which of course will depend much upon his age and the computation of the value of his life); and it will be referred to a Master, to ascertain and report what proportion of the capital sum due, the tenant for life ought, upon this basis, to pay, and what ought to be borne by the remainder-

¹ *Wigsell v. Wigsell*, 2 Sim. & Stu. 364.

² *Saville v. Saville*, 2 Atk. 463, 464; *Jones v. Morgan*, 1 Bro. Ch. 218; *Shrewsbury v. Shrewsbury*, 1 Ves. Jr. 233; s. c. 3 Bro. Ch. 120; *Ex parte Digby, Jacob*, 235.

³ *Jones v. Morgan*, 1 Bro. Ch. 218, 219; *St. Paul v. Viscount Dudley and Ward*, 15 Ves. 173; *Redington v. Redington*, 1 B. & Beatt. 141, 142.

⁴ *Powell on Mortg.* ch. 11, p. 311; *Ballet v. Spranger*, Prec. Ch. 62; *Shrewsbury (County of) v. Earl of Shrewsbury*, 1 Ves. Jr. 233; *Rives v. Rives*, Prec. Ch. 21; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 9, note (a), 3d edit.; *Faulkner v. Daniel*, 3 Harc. 199, 217.

⁵ *White v. White*, 4 Ves. 33; *Verney v. Verney*, 1 Ves. 428; s. c. Amb. 88; *Nightingale v. Lawson*, 1 Bro. Ch. 440.

man or reversioner.¹ If the estate is sold to discharge encumbrances (as the encumbrancer may insist that it shall be), in such a case, the surplus, beyond what is necessary to discharge the encumbrances, is to be applied as follows: the income thereof is to go to the tenant for life, during his life; and then the whole capital is to be paid over to the remainder-man or reversioner.²

§ 488. In regard to the interest due upon mortgages and other encumbrances, the question often arises, by whom and in what manner it is to be paid. And, here the general rule is, that a tenant for life of an equity of redemption is bound to keep down and pay the interest, although he is under no obligation to pay off the principal.³ But a tenant in tail is not bound to keep down the interest; and yet, if he does, his personal representative has no right to be allowed the sums so paid, as a charge on the estate.⁴ The reason of this distinction is, that a tenant in tail, discharging the interest, is supposed to do it, as owner, for the benefit of the estate. He is not compellable to pay the interest; because he has the power, at any time, to make himself absolute owner against the remainder-man, and reversioner. The latter have no equity to compel him, in their favor, to keep down the interest, inasmuch, as if they take any thing, it is solely by his forbearance, and, of course, they must take it *cum onere*.⁵

¹ See 1 Powell on Mortg. ch. 11, p. 311, 312. Mr. Coventry's note, M; Penrhyn v. Hughes, 5 Ves. 107; White v. White, 4 Ves. 33, 9 Ves. 554; Allan v. Backhouse, 2 Ves. & B. 70, 79.

² Penrhyn v. Hughes, 5 Ves. 107; White v. White, 4 Ves. 33; 3 Powell on Mortg. ch. 19, p. 922, Mr. Coventry's note, H.; id. 1043, note O; Lloyd v. Johns, 9 Ves. 37; Foster v. Hilliard, 1 Story, 77. Many cases may occur of far more complicated adjustments, than are here stated; but in a treatise like the present, little more than the general rules can be indicated. See Rives v. Rives, Prec. Ch. 21; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 9, and note. See also Gibson v. Crehore, 5 Pick. 146. The converse case of that stated in the text will readily occur to the learned reader; namely, where mortgage-money or a mortgage is devised to a tenant for life, with a remainder over, and the mortgage-money is paid by the mortgagor. The old rule used to be, to divide it between the tenant for life and the remainder-man, in the proportion of one-third and two-thirds. But it would probably now be governed by the same rules as those in the text. 3 Powell on Mortg. 1043, Mr. Coventry's note, O.

³ Saville v. Saville, 2 Atk. 463, 464; Shrewsbury v. Shrewsbury, 1 Ves. Jr. 233.

⁴ Amesbury v. Brown, 1 Ves. 480, 481; Redington v. Redington, 1 Ball & B. 143; Chaplin v. Chaplin, 3 P. Will. 234, 235.

⁵ Ibid. There is an exception to the general rule, that a tenant in tail is not

§ 488 *a*. Similar questions may arise, as to the apportionment of the money between a tenant for life and a remainder-man in fee, who have united in a sale of the estate, without providing for the manner of apportioning the purchase-money between them, and one of them has died before any apportionment has been made. In such a case how is the money to be divided? Is the tenant for life to be deemed entitled to the income of the whole fund during his life, and then the whole fund go to the remainder-man? Or is the value of the estate of each party to be ascertained, calculating that of the tenant for life according to the common tables respecting the probabilities of life, and the principal of the fund to be apportioned between them accordingly? It has been held, upon deliberate consideration, that the latter is the true rule applicable to such cases, upon the ground that it must be presumed, in such cases of a joint sale, that the parties mean to share the purchase-money according to their respective interests in the estate at the time of the sale, and not merely to substitute one fund for another.¹

§ 489. These remarks may suffice to show (for it is not our purpose to bring the minute distinctions upon these important subjects under a full review)² the beneficial operations of courts of equity, in apportionments and contributions, upon this confessedly intricate subject; and, also, how utterly inadequate a court of common law would be to do complete justice, in a vast variety of cases, which may easily be suggested. Without some proceedings, in the nature of an account before a Master, there would be no suitable elements, upon which any court of justice could dispose of the merits

bound to keep down the interest, which confirms, rather than impugns, the general rule. If the tenant in tail is an infant, his guardian or trustee will, in that case be required to keep down the interest. The reason is, that the infant, of his own free will, cannot bar the remainder, and make himself absolute owner. See Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 1, ch. 2, § 1, p. 187; *Sergeson v. Sealey*, 2 Atk. 416, and Mr. Saunders's note (1), *id.*; *Amesbury v. Brown*, 1 Ves. 479, 480, 481; *Bertie v. Lord Abingdon*, 3 Meriv. 560.

¹ *Foster v. Hilliard*, 1 Story, 77, where the subject was discussed at large. See also *Brent v. Best*, 1 Vern. 69; *Truelock v. Robey*, 11 Jurist, 999; *Thynn v. Duvall*, 2 Vern. 117; *Houghton v. Hapgood*, 13 Pick. 154. But see *Penrhyn v. Hughes*, 5 Ves. 99, 107. [* See *Edmunds v. Waugh*, 12 Jur. n. s. 326; s. c. L. R. 1 Eq. 418; 14 W. R. 257.]

² See 1 Bridgeman's Digest, Average & Contribution, III.; 1 Chitty, Eq. Dig. Apportionment.

of such cases, so as to suppress future litigation, or to administer to the conflicting rights of different parties.

§ 490. Another class of cases, which still more fully illustrates the importance and value of this branch of equity jurisdiction, is that of GENERAL AVERAGE, a subject of daily occurrence in maritime and commercial operations. General average, in the sense of the maritime law, means a general contribution, that is to be made by all parties in interest, towards a loss or expense, which is voluntarily sustained or incurred for the benefit of all.¹ The principle upon which this contribution is founded, is not the result of contract, but has its origin in the plain dictates of natural law.² It has been more immediately derived to us from the positive declarations of the Roman law, which borrowed it from the more ancient text of the Rhodian jurisprudence. Thus, the Rhodian law, in cases of jettison, declared, that, "If goods are thrown overboard in order to lighten a ship, the loss, incurred for the sake of all, shall be made good by the contribution of all. 'Lege Rhodia' (says the Digest) 'cavetur, ut si levandæ navis gratiâ jactus mercium factus est, omnium contributione sarciatur, quod pro omnibus datum est.'"³ But the principle is by no means confined to cases of jettison; but it is applied to all other sacrifices of property, sums paid, and expenses voluntarily incurred in the course of maritime voyages, for the common benefit of all persons concerned in the adventure. The principle has, indeed, been confined to a sacrifice of property, and the contribution confined to the property saved thereby, although it certainly might have gone farther, and have required a corresponding apportionment of the loss or sacrifice of property upon all persons, whose lives have been preserved thereby, upon the same common sense of danger, and purchase of safety, alluded to by Juvenal, when, in a similar case, his friend desired his life to be saved by a sacrifice of his property; — *Fundite, quæ mea sunt etiam pulcherrima.*

§ 491. In general average, being, then, as has been already stated, not confined to cases of jettison, but extending to other losses and expenditures for the common benefit, it may readily be

¹ Abbott on Shipp. Pt. 3, ch. 8, § 1, p. 342; Moore, 297; Viner's Abridg. Contribution and Average, A. pl. 1, 2, 26.

² Ibid.; Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea, 1 Cox, 318, 323; s. c. 2 Bos. & Pull. 270, 274; Stirling v. Forrester, 3 Bligh, 590, 596.

³ Dig. Lib. 14, tit. 2, l. 1.

perceived, how difficult it would be for a court of law to apportion and adjust the amount, which is to be paid by each distinct interest, which is involved in the common calamity and expenditure. Take, for instance, the common case of a general ship or packet, trading between Liverpool and New York, and having on board various shipments of goods, not unfrequently exceeding a hundred in number, consigned to different persons, as owners or consignees; and suppose a case of general average to arise during the voyage, and the loss or expenditure to be apportioned among all these various shippers according to their respective interests, and the amount which the whole cargo is to contribute to the reimbursement thereof. By the general rule of the maritime law, in all cases of general average, the ship, the freight for the voyage, and the cargo on board, are to contribute to such reimbursement, according to their relative values. The first step in the process of general average, is to ascertain the amount of the loss for which contribution is to be made, as, for instance, in the case of jettison, the value of the property thrown overboard, or sacrificed for the common preservation. The value is generally indefinite and unascertained, and, from its very nature, rarely admits of an exact and fixed computation. The same remark applies to the case of ascertainment of the value of the contributory interest, the ship, the freight, and the cargo. These are generally differently estimated by different persons, and rarely admit of a positive and indisputable estimation in price or value. Now, as the owners of the ship, and the freight, and the cargo, may be, and generally are, in the supposed case, different persons, having a separate interest, and often an adverse interest to each other, it is obvious, that unless all the persons in interest can be made parties in one common suit, so as to have the whole adjustment made at once, and made binding upon all of them, infinite embarrassments must arise, in ascertaining and apportioning the general average. In a proceeding at the common law, every party, having a sole and distinct interest, must be separately sued;¹ and as the verdict and judgment in one case will not only not be conclusive, but not even be admissible evidence in another suit, as it is *res inter alios acta*; and as the amount to be recovered must in each case depend upon the value of all the interests to be affected, which, of course, might be differently estimated

¹ Abbott on Shipp. Pt. 3, ch. 8, § 17.

by different juries, it is manifest that the grossest injustice, or the most oppressive litigation might take place in all cases of general average on board of general ships. A court of equity, having authority to bring all the parties before it, and to refer the whole matter to a Master, to take an account, and to adjust the whole apportionment at once, affords a safe, convenient, and expeditious remedy. And it is accordingly the customary mode of remedy in all cases, where a controversy arises, and a court of equity exists in the place, capable of administering the remedy.¹

[* § 491 *a*. But where a controversy arose in the English courts of equity, in regard to general average, or contribution to a loss sustained, by collision at sea, between two American ships, it was held, that the English statutes had no application to the case, and that the court would not take judicial notice; that the law of America is the same, in regard to the matter in dispute, as that of England; but if that fact were averred and proved in the cases, the English courts may administer American law, between Americans.²]

§ 492. Another class of cases, to illustrate the beneficial effects of equity jurisdiction over matters of account, is that of CONTRIBUTION BETWEEN SURETIES, who are bound for the same principal, and upon his default, one of them is compelled to pay the money, or to perform any other obligation, for which they all became bound.³ In cases of this sort, the surety who has paid the whole, is entitled to receive contribution from all the others, for what he has done in relieving them from a common burden⁴ [although the several sureties sign without any communication with each other⁵].

§ 493. The claim certainly has its foundation in the clearest principles of natural justice; for, as all are equally bound and are equally relieved, it seems but just that in such a case all should

¹ Abbott on Shipp. Pt. 3, ch. 8, § 17; *Shepherd v. Wright*, Shower, Parl. Cas. 18; *Hallett v. Bousefield*, 18 Ves. 190, 196.

² [* *Cope v. Doherty*, 4 Kay & Johnson, 367.]

³ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 D. 6.

⁴ *Layr v. Nelson*, 1 Vern. 456. On the subject of contribution, there is a valuable note of the Reporter's to the case of *Averall v. Wade*, Lloyd & Goold, 264 to 266; *Spencer v. Parry*, 3 Adolph. & Ell. 331; *Davies v. Humphries*, 6 Maule & Selw. 153; *Cowell v. Edwards*, 2 Bos. & Pull. 268; *Brown v. Lee*, 6 Barn. & Cress. 689; *Kemp v. Finden*, 12 Mees. & Welsb. 421.

⁵ *Norton v. Coons*, 2 Selden, 33.

contribute in proportion towards a benefit obtained by all, upon the maxim, *Qui sentit commodum, sentire debet et onus*.¹ And the doctrine has an equal foundation in morals; since no one ought to profit by another man's loss; where he himself has incurred a like responsibility. Any other rule would put it in the power of the creditor to select his own victim; and, upon motives of mere caprice or favoritism, to make a common burden a most gross personal oppression. It would be against equity for the creditor to exact or receive payment from one, and to permit, or by his conduct to cause, the other debtors to be exempt from payment. And the creditor is always bound in conscience, although he is seldom bound by contract, as far as he is able, to put the party paying the debt upon the same footing with those who are equally bound.² It can be no matter of surprise, therefore, to find, that courts of equity, at a very early period, adopted and acted upon this salutary doctrine, as equally well founded in equity and morality.³ The ground of relief does not, therefore, stand upon any notion of mutual contract, express or implied, between the sureties to indemnify each other in proportion (as has sometimes been argued); but it arises from principles of equity, independent of contract.⁴

¹ See Shelly's case, 1 Co. 99; *Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea*, 1 Cox, 318, 322; s. c. 2 Bos. & Pull. 270, 274; *Craythorne v. Swinburne*, 14 Ves. 159; *Rogers v. Mackenzie*, 4 Ves. 752.

² *Stirling v. Forrester*, 3 Bligh, 590, 591.

³ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 D. 6, S. 2; *Peter v. Rich*, 1 Ch. 34; *Morgan v. Seymour*, 1 Ch. 121; *Stirling v. Forrester*, 3 Bligh, 590, 591.

⁴ *Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea*, 1 Cox, 318; s. c. 2 Bos. & Pull. 270; 1 *White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cases*, 60, and notes; *Ex parte Gifford*, 6 Ves. 805; *Craythorne v. Swinburne*, 14 Ves. 159; *Stirling v. Forrester*, 3 Bligh, 590, 596; *Campbell v. Mesier*, 4 Johns. Ch. 334, 338; *Onge v. Truelock*, 2 Molloy, 31, 42; *Copis v. Middleton*, 1 Turn. & Russ. 224; *Hodgson v. Shaw*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 191. In *Stirling v. Forrester*, 3 Bligh, 496, Lord Redesdale said: "The decision in *Deering v. Lord Winchelsea* (1 Cox, 318; 2 Bos. & Pull. 270) proceeded on a principle of law, which must exist in all countries, that, where several persons are debtors, all shall be equal. The doctrine is illustrated in that case by the practice in questions of average, &c., where there is no express contract, but equity distributes the loss equally. On the prisage of wines, it is immaterial whose wines are taken; all must contribute equally. So it is where goods are thrown overboard for the safety of the ship. The owners of the goods saved by that act must contribute proportionally to the loss. The duty of contribution extends to all persons who are within the scope of the equitable obligation." *Post*, § 495, note (2). But see *Johnson v. Johnson*, 11 Mass. 359; *Taylor v. Savage*, 12 Mass. 98.

If the doctrine were otherwise, a surety would be utterly without relief; because (as we shall presently see) he has not, either in equity or at law, any title to compel the obligee to assign over the bond to him, upon his making payment or otherwise discharging the obligation.¹

§ 494. In the Roman law analogous principles existed, although, from the different arrangements of that system, they were developed under very different modifications. By that law, sureties were liable, indeed, for the whole debt due to the creditor; but this liability was subject to three modifications. In the first place, the creditor was generally bound to proceed by process of discussion (as it is now called), in the first instance against the principal debtor, to obtain satisfaction out of his effects, before he could resort to the sureties. In the next place, in a suit against one

¹ *Gammon v. Stone*, 1 Ves. 339; *Woffington v. Sparks*, 2 Ves. 569, 570. But see *Morgan v. Seymour*, 1 Ch. 120, and *Ex parte Crisp*, 1 Atk. 135; *Copis v. Middleton*, 1 Turn. & Russ. 224; *Hodgson v. Shaw*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 189; *Dowbiggin v. Bourne*, 2 Younge & Coll. 471; *Reed v. Norris*, 2 Mylne & Craig, 361. Mr. Chancellor Kent, in *Cheeseborough v. Millard* (1 Johns. Ch. 413), seems to have thought that a surety paying off a debt is entitled to a cession or assignment of the debt, to enable him to have satisfaction from the principal and his co-sureties. He relied on the cases in 1 Ch. 20, and 1 Atk. 35; but he did not cite the cases in 1 Ves. 339, and 2 Ves. 569, 570. However, the point was not decided by him. See also *Avery v. Petten*, 7 Johns. Ch. 211, where the same learned Chancellor acted upon the ground that an assignment might be decreed; but upon very satisfactory grounds he refused it in that case. His grounds, however, seem equally applicable against any assignment in any case, where all the parties in interest are not before the court; and if they are, there seems no necessity for the assignment, since there may be a direct decree for contribution without it. It is one thing to decide that a surety is entitled, on payment, to have an assignment of the debt; and quite another to decide that he is entitled to be subrogated, or substituted, as to other equities and securities, in the place of the creditor, against the debtor and his co-sureties. See *King v. Baldwin*, 2 Johns. Ch. 560; *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 123. See also *Himes v. Keller*, 3 Watts & Serg. 401; *Bowditch v. Green*, 3 Met. 310; *Powell's Ex'rs v. White*, 11 Leigh, 309. In *Stirling v. Forrester*, 3 Bligh, 590, 591, Lord Redesdale said: "If several persons are indebted, and one makes payment, the creditor is bound in conscience, if not by contract, to give the party paying the debt all his remedies against the other debtors." Mr. Theobald in his *Treatise on Principal and Surety*, ch. 10, § 270, has by mistake attributed a remark of Sir Samuel Romilly, *arguendo*, to the Lord Chancellor. It bears on this very point, and therefore the error should be corrected. See *post*, § 499 to 502, and notes, *id.*; and *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 12, 22; *Butcher v. Churchill*, 14 Ves. 568, 575, 576; *post*, § 635, 636.

surety, although each surety was bound for the whole debt after the discussion of the principal debtor; yet the surety in such suit had a right to have the debt apportioned among all the solvent sureties on the same obligation, so that he should be compellable to pay his own share only; and this was called the benefit of division.¹ But if a surety should pay the whole debt, without insisting upon the benefit of division, then he had no right of recourse over against his co-sureties, unless (which is the third case), upon the payment, he procured himself to be substituted to the original debt (which he might insist on) by a cession thereof from the creditor; in which case he might insist upon a payment of a proper proportion from each of his co-sureties.² And, in case of the insolvency of either of the sureties, the share of the insolvent was to be apportioned upon all the solvent sureties, *pro rata*.³ The same principles in a great measure, but not in all cases, now regulate the same subject among the continental nations of Europe, whose jurisprudence is derived from the civil law.⁴

¹ Domat, B. 3, tit. 4, § 2, art. 1, 6; Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, n. 407; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 46, tit. 1, § 5, art. 1, n. 41 to 45; id. art. 3, n. 51 to 61; Cheeseborough v. Millard, 1 Johns. Ch. 414; Hayes v. Ward, 4 Johns. Ch. 131, 132; *post*, § 636, note.

² 1 Domat, B. 3, tit. 4, § 4, art. 1; Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, n. 407, 519, 520, 521 (556, 557, 558, of the French editions); Pothier, Pand. Lib. 56, tit. 1, art. 2, n. 45 to 51.

³ 1 Domat, B. 3, tit. 4, art. 2; Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, n. 407, 415, 418, 419, 420, 421, 445, 518, 519, 520, 521 (555 to 559, of French editions); id. 282; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 46, tit. 1, art. 2, n. 45 to 51; Dig. Lib. 46, tit. 1, l. 26; Cod. Lib. 8, tit. 14, l. 2. See also 1 Bell. Comm. B. 3, Pt. 1, ch. 3, § 3, art. 283 to 286; Ersk. Inst. B. 3, tit. 3, art. 61 to 74; 1 Domat, B. 3, tit. 1, § 3, art. 6, and Domat's note; *post*, § 635.

⁴ Merlin, Repert. art. *Discussion*; id. *Division*; Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, Pt. 2, ch. 6, art. 2, n. 407, 415, 416; id. Pt. 2, ch. 3, art. 8, n. 280; id. Pt. 3, ch. 1, art. 6, § 2, n. 519 to 524 (556 to 559, of the French editions); 1 Domat, B. 3, tit. 1, § 3, art. 6, and Domat's note, *ibid.*; Cod. Lib. 8, tit. 14, l. 2. The same principle, in regard to the necessity of the creditor's discussing the principal debtor, before resorting to the surety, has been adopted in most countries deriving their jurisprudence from the civil law; but it is not universally adopted. It prevails in France, Holland, and Scotland; but not (as it seems) generally in Germany. See Mr. Chancellor Kent's learned opinion in Hayes v. Ward, 4 Johns. Ch. 130 to 135, where he cites the foreign authorities on this point. These authorities fully justify his statement. The following extract from that opinion may be acceptable. "According to the Roman law, in use before the time of Justinian, the creditor, as with us, could apply to the surety, before applying to the principal. *Jure nostro est potestas creditori, relicto reo, eligendi*

§ 495. Originally, it seems to have been questioned, whether contribution between sureties, unless founded upon some positive contract between them, incurring such liability, was a matter capable of being enforced at law. But there is now no doubt that it may be enforced at law, as well as in equity, although no such contract exists.¹ And it matters not, in case of a debt, whether the sureties are jointly and severally bound, or only severally, or whether their suretyship arises under the same obligation or instrument, or under divers obligations or instruments, if all the instruments are for the same identical debt.²

fidejussores (Code, Lib. 8, tit. 41, § 5); and the same law was declared in another imperial ordinance (Code, Lib. 8, tit. 41, § 19). But Justinian, in one of his Novels (Nov. 4, ch. 1, entitled *Ut Creditores primo loco convenient Principalem*), allowed to sureties the exception of discussion, or *beneficium ordinis*, by which they could require that, before they were sued, the principal debtor should, at their expense, be prosecuted to judgment and execution. It is a dilatory exception, and puts off the action of the creditor against the surety, until the remedy against the principal debtor has been sufficiently exhausted. This provision in the Novels has not been followed in the states and cities of Germany, except in Pomerania (Heinecc. Elem. Jur. Germ. lib. 2, tit. 16, § 449, 450, 451, 465); but it has been adopted in those other countries in Europe, as France, Holland, Scotland, &c., which follow the rules of the civil law (Pothier, *Traité des Oblig.* No. 407-414; Code Napoléon, No. 2021, 2, 3; Voet, *Com. ad Pand. tit. De Fidejussoribus*, 46, 1, 14-20; Hub. *Prælec.* lib. 3, tit. 21, § 6; Ersk. *Inst.* 504, § 61). A rule of such general adoption shows that there is nothing in it inconsistent with the relative rights and duties of principal and surety, and that it accords with a common sense of justice, and the natural equity of mankind." It may be well here to state that I generally cite Pothier on Obligations from Mr. Evans's edition. It is important to remark that after n. 456, in Evans's edition, the subsequent numbers differ from the common French editions, owing to Pothier having, in his later editions, inserted between that number and number 457, a new section containing thirty-five numbers, so that No. 457, in Evans's edition, stands in the common editions of Pothier, No. 493. See Mr. Evans's note (a) to Pothier on *Oblig. Pt. 2, ch. 6, § 9, p. 306*. This explanation may be useful to the reader, to prevent mistakes, or supposed mistakes, in the references usually made in English and American works to Pothier. *Post*, § 635 to 640.

¹ See *Kemp v. Finden*, 12 Mees. & Welsb. 421; *Norton v. Coons*, 3 Denio, 180; *Harris v. Ferguson*, 2 Bailey, 397.

² *Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea*, 1 Cox, 318; s. c. 2 Bos. & Pull. 270; 1 Saun. 264 (a), Mr. Williams's note (c); *Craythorne v. Swinburne*, 14 Ves. 159, 169. In *Stirling v. Forrester* (3 Bligh, 590, O. S.), Lord Redesdale said: "The principle established in the case of *Deering v. Lord Winchelsea*, is universal, that the right and duty of contribution is founded in doctrines of equity. It does not depend upon contract. If several persons are indebted, and one

§ 496. But still the jurisdiction now assumed in courts of law upon this subject, in no manner affects that originally and intrinsically belonging to equity.¹ Indeed, there are many cases in which the relief is more complete and effectual in equity than it can be at law; as, for instance, where an account and discovery are wanted; or where there are numerous parties in interest, which would occasion a multiplicity of suits.² In some cases the remedy at law is now utterly inadequate. As, if there are several sureties, and one is insolvent, and another pays the debt, he can, at law, recover from the other solvent sureties only the same share as he could if all were solvent. Thus, if there are four sureties, and one is insolvent, a solvent surety, who pays the whole debt, can recover only one-fourth part thereof (and not a third part) against the other two solvent sureties.³ But in a court of equity, he will be entitled to recover one-third part of the debt against each of them; for, in equity, the insolvents' share is apportioned among all the other solvent sureties.⁴

makes the payment, the creditor is bound in conscience, if not by contract, to give to the party paying the debt all his remedies against the other debtors. The cases of average in equity rest upon the same principle. It would be against equity for the creditor to exact or receive payment from one, and to permit, or by his conduct to cause, the other debtors to be exempt from payment. He is bound, seldom by contract, but always in conscience, as far as he is able, to put the party paying the debt upon the same footing with those who are equally bound. That was the principle of decision in *Deering v. Lord Winchelsea*; and in that case there was no evidence of contract, as in this. So, in the case of land descending to coparceners, subject to a debt; if the creditor proceeds against one of the coparceners, the others must contribute. If the creditor discharges one of the coparceners, he cannot proceed for the whole debt against the others; at the most, they are only bound to pay their proportions." His lordship afterwards, in pronouncing judgment, added the words which have been already cited in § 493, note. See also *post*, § 498, in what cases no contribution is allowed.

¹ *Wright v. Hunter*, 5 Ves. 792.

² *Craythorne v. Swinburne*, 14 Ves. 159; *Cowell v. Edwards*, 2 Bos. & Pull. 268; *Wright v. Hunter*, 5 Ves. 792.

³ *Cowell v. Edwards*, 2 Bos. & Pull. 268; *Brown v. Lee*, 6 B. & Cressw. 697. See also *Rogers v. Mackenzie*, 4 Ves. 752; *Wright v. Hunter*, 5 Ves. 792.

⁴ *Peter v. Rich*, 1 Ch. Rep. 34; *Cowell v. Edwards*, 2 Bos. & Pull. 268; *Hale v. Harrison*, 1 Ch. Cas. 246; *Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea*, 2 Bos. & Pull. 270; s. c. 1 Cox, 318. But see *Swain v. Wall*, 1 Ch. Rep. 149, 150, 151. See also *Pothier on Oblig. n. 275, 281, 282, 428, 521 (n. 556, of the French editions)*, the same principles.

[* § 496 *a*. In some of the American States, courts of law now follow the rule adopted in courts of equity in apportioning the share of an insolvent surety upon those who remain solvent.¹ And the distinction, in the extent of redress, between a court of law and a court of equity, in cases where some of the sureties are insolvent, is certainly not based upon any very obvious principle affecting the different jurisdictions. It has more the appearance of an arbitrary rule, and as such may be expected to gradually disappear, in the same way most of its kindred have already done.]

§ 497. And upon the like grounds, if one of the sureties dies, the remedy at law lies only against the surviving parties; whereas, in equity, it may be enforced against the representative of the deceased party, and he may be compelled to contribute his share to the surviving surety, who shall pay the whole debt.² Where there are several distinct bonds with different penalties, and a surety upon one bond pays the whole, the contribution between the sureties is in proportion to the penalties of their respective bonds. But, as between the sureties to the same bond, the general rule is that of equality of burden, *inter sese*.³

[* § 497 *a*. It may be questioned whether the more recent decisions in courts of equity justify any such discrimination between sureties for the same debt, by different bonds, with different sums as penalties,⁴ unless where the purpose of the different sums in which the sureties are bound is to show that the obligor incurs the hazard of only a portion of the debt, or a portion of what the other sureties assume.⁵]

§ 498. These are cases of contribution of a simple and distinct

¹ [* *Mills v. Hyde*, 19 Vt. 59; *Henderson v. McDuffee*, 5 N. H. 38; *Chitty on Cont.* (Perkins's edit. 1860) 584, and note. See also *Jones v. Blanton*, 6 Ired. Eq. 116; *Aikin v. Peay*, 5 Strobb. 15.]

² *Primrose v. Bromley*, 1 Atk. 89.

³ See *Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea*, 1 Cox, 318; s. c. 2 Bos. & Pull. 270.

⁴ [* See *Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea*, and notes, *English and American*, 1 *Leading Cases in Equity*, 78; s. c. 1 Cox, 318; 2 B. & P. 270. This was the case which first decided that contribution among sureties is not matter of contract, but of general equity, on the ground of equality of burden and benefit. We infer, therefore, that the difference between the penalties of the bond will make no difference, provided each exceed the debt, or the purpose of each is to bind all the sureties to the extent of the whole debt.

⁵ *Coope v. Twynam*, 1 T. & Russ. 426; *post*, § 498.]

character. But, in cases of suretyship, others of a very complicated nature may arise, from counter-equities between some or all of the parties, resulting from contract, or from equities between themselves, or from peculiar transactions regarding third persons.¹ Thus, for instance, although the general rule is, that there shall be a contribution between sureties, by the rule of equality, that may be modified by express contract between them; and, in such a case, courts of equity will be governed by the terms of such contract, in giving or refusing contribution.² In like manner, there may arise by implication, from the very nature of the transaction, an exemption of one surety from becoming liable to contribution in favor of another. Thus, if one surety should not upon his own mere motion, but at the express solicitation of his co-surety, become a party to the instrument; and such co-surety should afterwards be compelled to pay the whole debt; in such a case, he would not be entitled to contribution, unless it clearly appeared that there was no intention to vary the general right of contribution, in the understanding of the parties.³ So, if different sureties should be bound by different instruments, for equal portions of the debt of the same principal, and it clearly appeared that the suretyship of each was a separate and distinct transaction, there would be no right of contribution of one against the other.⁴ So, if there should be separate bonds, given with different sureties, and one bond is intended to be subsidiary to, and a security for the other, in case of a default in payment of the latter, and not to be a primary concurrent security; in such a case, the sureties in the second bond would not be compellable to aid those in the first bond by any contribution.⁵

§ 498 *a*. A question of another sort has arisen: How far, and under what circumstances, the discharge of one surety by the creditor would operate as a discharge of the other sureties from their liability. It seems now clearly established at law, that a

¹ See *Hyde v. Tracey*, 2 Day, Cas. 422; *Ransom v. Keyes*, 9 Cowen, 128.

² *Swain v. Wall*, 1 Ch. 149; *Craythorne v. Swinburne*, 14 Ves. 159, 169; *Deering v. Earl of Winchelsea*, 1 Cox, 318; s. c. 2 Bos. & Pull. 270.

³ *Turner v. Davies*, 2 Esp. 478; *Mayhew v. Crickett*, 2 Swanst. 193; *Taylor v. Savage*, 12 Mass. 98, 102; [* *Cutter v. Emery*, 37 N. H. 567.]

⁴ *Coope v. Twynam*, 1 Turn. & Russ. 426. It would be different, if it should appear that it was the same transaction split into different parts by the agreement of all the parties. *Ib. d.*

⁵ *Craythorne v. Swinburne*, 14 Ves. 159. See *Cooke v. —*, 2 Freem. 97.

release or discharge of one surety by the creditor will operate as a discharge of all the other sureties, even though it may be founded on a mere mistake of law.¹ But it may be doubtful, whether the same rule will be allowed universally to prevail in equity. Thus, if a creditor has accepted a composition from one surety, and discharged him, it has been thought that he might still recover against another surety his full proportion of the original debt, without deducting the composition paid, if it did not exceed the proportion for which the surety was originally liable. In other words, each surety, notwithstanding such discharge, might be held liable in equity to pay his share of the original debt, treating each as liable for his equal or *pro rata* proportion, upon an equitable apportionment of it.² [* The *bonâ*

¹ *Nicholson v. Revell*, 4 Adolph. & Ellis, 675; s. c. 6 Nev. & Mann. 200; *ante*, § 112; [* *Pledge v. Buss*, Johnson, Eng. Ch. 663.]

² In *Ex parte Gifford* (6 Ves. 805), Lord Eldon held, that a discharge of one surety did not discharge the other sureties; and that, as each surety was bound to contribute his share towards the general payment, no one could recover over against another who had been discharged, unless for the excess paid by him beyond his due proportion. The creditor might, therefore, accept a composition from one surety, and still proceed against another, to recover his full proportion of the original debt, without deducting the composition paid, if it did not exceed the proportion for which the surety was originally liable. Mr. Theobald, in his *Treatise on Principal and Surety* (ch. 11, § 283, note (i), p. 267), thinks this decision could not have been made; and that it is misreported. I see no reason to question either the accuracy of the report, or the soundness of the doctrine. If the discharge of one surety is not the discharge of another, it seems difficult to see how the sum paid by one surety shall take away the obligation of another to pay his proportion of the original debt, if, upon the discharge, the right to proceed against such surety for his proportion was expressly, or by implication, reserved to the extent of that proportion. This seems to have been the ground of Lord Eldon's decision. In *Stirling v. Forrester* (3 Bligh, 591), Lord Redesdale said: "If the creditor discharges one of the coparceners, he cannot proceed for his whole debt against the others; at the most, they are only bound for their proportions." The same principle would apply to co-sureties; and, indeed, *Stirling v. Forrester* (3 Bligh, 591, 596) seems mainly to have been decided upon this ground. The distinction is between a discharge of the principal, and a discharge of the surety; between a part-payment by a surety, and a part-payment by the principal. In the recent case of *Nicholson v. Revell* (4 Adolph. & Ellis, 675; s. c. 6 Nev. & Mann. 192, 200), the Court of King's Bench decided that the creditor's discharge of one debtor, on a joint and several note, was, in law, a discharge of all the debtors. Lord Denman, in delivering the judgment of the court, said: "This view cannot, perhaps, be made entirely consistent with all that is said by Lord Eldon, in the case *Ex parte Gifford*, where his lordship

fide holder of a bill of exchange, who takes it without notice that the acceptor signed for accommodation merely, is not precluded from releasing the drawee by notice subsequently acquired.¹ But if this fact be known to the creditor at the time he accept the bill, for a guaranty of a floating balance of account, he is bound to deal with the several parties upon the paper according to their actual and not their apparent relations to each other.² But if the cred-

dismissed a petition to expunge the proof of a surety against the estate of a co-surety. But the principle, to which we have adverted, was not presented to his mind in its simple form; and the point, certainly, did not undergo much consideration. For some of the expressions employed would seem to lay it down, that a joint debtee might release one of his debtors, and yet, by using some language of reservation in the agreement between himself and such debtor, keep his remedy entire against the others, even without consulting them. If Lord Eldon used any language which could be so interpreted, we must conclude that he either did not guard himself so cautiously as he intended, or that he did not lend that degree of attention to the legal doctrine connected with the case before him, which he was accustomed to afford. We do not find that any other authority clashes with our present judgment, which must be in favor of the defendant." It is, however, to be remembered, that his lordship was here dealing with the question at law; but it by no means follows, that, because a security is extinguished at law, therefore it is extinguished in equity, if it is the clear intention of the parties that it shall not be extinguished. See 2 Story on Eq. Jurisp. § 1370, 1372. Pothier adopts very much the same principles and reasonings as Lord Eldon; asserting that the release of the creditor of one debtor would liberate all the others, if the creditor meant thereby to extinguish the debt; but not, if the creditor meant to reserve his rights against the other co-debtors for their proportions. 1 Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, n. 275, 278, 279, 280, 281; id. n. 521, [556]. Pothier has also treated the point of a discharge of one surety; and he holds, that a discharge of one surety discharges the other sureties for such proportion of the debt as, upon payment of the whole debt, they could have had recourse to him for. Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, n. 275, 277, 280, 281, 428, 429, 445, 519, 520, 521, 521 B, 523, [n. 556-560 of the French editions]. The rule of the civil law is the same. Si ex duobus, qui apud te fidejusserant in viginti, alter, ne ab eo peteres, quinque tibi deberit, vel promiserit; nec alter liberabitur. Et si ab altero quindecim petere institueris, nulla exceptione (cedendarum actionem) summo veris. Reliqua autem quinque, si a priori fidejussore petere institueris, doli mali exceptione summo veris. Dig. Lib. 46, tit. 1, l. 15, § 1; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 46, tit. 1, n. 47. [* Ante, § 164 a, and note.]

¹ [* Graham, *ex parte*, 5 De G., M. & G. 356; Farmers & Mech. Bank v. Rathbone, 26 Vt. 19, where the subject is very fully and satisfactorily discussed, and the cases extensively cited and compared by Isham, J.]

² Davies v. Stainbank, 6 De G., M. & G. 679. But this latter case seems to rest mainly upon the ground that the bill was held as a mere guaranty. It was held that a landlord, who made distress for rent upon property he held as securi-

itor is informed, when his debt is contracted, that the relation of principal and surety exists between his co-debtors, he is bound thereafter to treat them as such at his peril.¹

§ 498 *b*. The rule laid down in the preceding section, that where the creditor varies the contract by an arrangement between himself and the principal, without the privity of the surety; or between himself and one or more of the sureties, without the concurrence of the others; as if he release one of the sureties, that he thereby vitiates his claim against the surety not consulted only to the extent of the injury thereby sustained by him, may have the countenance of absolute moral justice, and has certainly been sustained by the opinions of eminent judges. But it is not supported by the general course of modern decisions, and is at variance with the cardinal principle of the law of suretyship, that the surety may claim to stand upon the very terms of his contract.² And where a landlord held a note with surety for money loaned his tenant, and had also a security for this and other money subsequently loaned, by the mortgage of the tenant's furniture, it was held that he released the surety by taking the furniture under a distress for rent in arrear.³]

§ 498 *c*. Indeed, circumstances may exist, under which even a release of the principal might not release the surety from the debt, where it was clear, from the whole transaction, that it was intended that the surety should remain bound. Thus, where, before the release to the principal, the surety had paid part of the debt, and given a security (an acceptance) for the remainder, it was held that it was not a release of the surety, in the absence of all evidence to establish the contrary intent.⁴

§ 499. Sureties are not only entitled to contribution from each other for moneys paid in discharge of their joint liabilities for the principal; but they are also entitled to the benefit of all securities, which have been taken by any one of them to indemnify himself against such liabilities.⁵ Courts of equity have gone farther in

ty for a loan to the tenant, thereby released the surety. *Pearl v. Deacon*, 1 De G. & Jones, 461. ¹ *Wythes v. Labouchere*, 3 De G. & J. 593.

² *Evans v. Bremridge*, 2 Kay & Johnson, 174. It is here said that the *dicta* to the contrary in *Ex parte Gifford*, 6 Ves. 805, have not been followed.

³ *Pearl v. Deacon*, 1 De G. & J. 461.]

⁴ *Hall v. Hutchins*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 426.

⁵ See Theobald on Principal and Surety, ch. 11, § 283; *Swain v. Wall*, 1 Ch.

their favor, and held them entitled, upon payment of the debt due by their principal to the creditor, to have the full benefit of all the collateral securities, both of a legal and equitable nature, which the creditor has taken as an additional pledge for his debt.¹ Thus, for example, if, at the time when the bond of the principal and surety is given, a mortgage also is made by the principal to the creditor, as an additional security for the debt; there, if the surety pays the debt, he will be entitled to have an assignment of that mortgage, and to stand in the place of the mortgagee.² [* And the same rule applies to all securities taken by the creditor, subsequent to the surety becoming bound.³] And, as the mortgagor cannot get back his estate again without a reconveyance, that assignment and security will remain a valid and effectual security in favor of the surety, notwithstanding the bond is paid.⁴ This indeed is but an illustration of a much broader doctrine established by courts of equity, which is, that a creditor shall not, by his own election of

Rep. 149; *Steale v. Mealing*, 24 Ala. 285. But see *Bowditch v. Green*, 3 Met. 360; *Himes v. Keller*, 3 Watts & Serg. 401; *Commercial Bank of Lake Erie v. Western Reserve Bank*, 11 Ohio (Stanton), 444; *Wiggin v. Dorr*, 3 Sumner, 410; [* *Miller v. Sawyer*, 30 Vt. 412; *Leary v. Cheshire*, 3 Jones, Eq. 170.]

¹ *Craythorne v. Swinburne*, 14 Ves. 159; *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 12, 22; *Copis v. Middleton*, 1 Turn. & Russ. 224; *Jones v. Davis*, 4 Russ. 277; *Dowbiggin v. Bourne*, 1 Younge, 111; s. c. 2 Younge & Coll. 462, 470; *Hodgson v. Shaw*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 183; *Reed v. Norris*, 2 M. & Craig, 361; *ante*, § 327; *Ex parte Rushworth*, 10 Ves. 409, 420, 422; *Mayhew v. Crickett*, 2 Swanst. 191; *Wade v. Coope*, 2 Sim. 155. But see *Bowditch v. Green*, 3 Met. 360, *contra*. But a surety for a part of a debt is not entitled to the benefit of a security given by the debtor to the creditor at a different time for another part of the debt. *Wade v. Coope*, 2 Simons, 155.

² See *Loud v. Sergeant*, 1 Edw. Ch. 164; *Marsh v. Pike*, 1 Sandf. 211; *McLean v. Towle*, 3 Sandf. 117, 136, 161; *Bank v. Campbell*, 2 Rich. Eq. 180; *Atwood v. Vincent*, 17 Conn. 576; *Wheatley v. Calhoun*, 12 Leigh, 265; [* *Gedye v. Matson*, 25 Beavan, 310.

³ *Pledge v. Buss*, Johnson, Eng. Ch. 663.]

⁴ *Ante*, § 421 a; *Williams v. Owen*, The (English) Jurist, 30th Dec. 1843, p. 1145, and the learned note of the reporter, p. 1146, 1147; *Copis v. Middleton*, 1 Turn. & Russ. 224, 229, 231; *Dowbiggin v. Bourne*, 2 Younge & Coll. 471, 472. Lord Brougham, in the case of *Hodgson v. Shaw*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 190, 191, 192, puts this doctrine in a strong light. *Post*, 499 c, n. 1. See also *Boulby v. Stubbs*, 16 Ves. 20; *Stokes v. Mendon*, 3 Swanst. 130, note; *Mayhew v. Crickett*, 2 Swanst. 185, 190, note; *Beckett v. Booth*, 1 Eq. Abridg. 595.

the fund, out of which he will receive payment, prejudice the rights which other persons are entitled to; but they shall either be substituted to his rights, or they may compel him to seek satisfaction out of the fund, to which they cannot resort.¹ It is often exemplified in cases where a party, having two funds to resort to for payment of his debt, elects to proceed against one, and thereby disappoints another party, who can resort to that fund only. In such a case, the disappointed party is substituted in the place of the electing creditor, or the latter is compelled to resort, in the first instance, to that fund which will not interfere with the rights of the other.² [* And it is true also, that the creditor may compel the sureties to assign to him all securities held by them for the payment of the debt, provided the creditor cannot enforce the payment of the debt in any other mode. But it was held, in a recent case in Connecticut,³ that where a mortgage is given to indemnify the surety; and not to secure the debt, the security does not in the first instance attach to the debt as an incident, but if any equity arises, in behalf of the creditor it comes into operation subsequently, and grows out of intervening insolvency. And until this equity arises the surety has a right to relinquish the security, and the creditor can only enforce his equity after it is perfected and against such securities as the surety holds after knowledge of the creditor's equity. This, although in conformity to the common understanding of unprofessional and business men, is not, we apprehend, altogether consistent with the general scope of the rule

¹ *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 12; *Ex parte Gifford*, 6 Ves. 805, 807. See *Rumbold v. Rumbold*, 3 Ves. 63; *Mayhew v. Crickett*, 2 Swanst. 186, 191; *Miller v. Ord*, 2 Binn. 382; *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 409, 412; *Stevens v. Cooper*, 1 Johns. Ch. 430; *Lawrence v. Cornell*, 4 Johns. Ch. 545; *King v. Baldwin*, 2 Johns. Ch. 554; *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 123; *Clason v. Morris*, 10 Johns. 524; *Everston v. Booth*, 19 Johns. 486; *Averall v. Wade*, *Lloyd & Goold*, 252; *ante*, § 324, 326, 493; *post*, § 502; *Stirling v. Forrester*, 3 Bligh, 590, 591; *post*, § 633 to 640; *Selby v. Selby*, 4 Russ. 336; *Gwynne v. Edwards*, 2 Russ. 289 n; *Bute v. Cunynghame*, 2 Russ. 275; *post*, § 558, 559, 560 to 568; *Boazman v. Johnson*, 3 Sim. 377.

² *Sagittary v. Hyde*, 1 Vern. 455, and Mr. Raithby's note; *Mills v. Eden*, 10 Mod. 488; *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 388; *Trimmer v. Bayne*, 9 Ves. 209; *Robinson v. Wilson*, 2 Mad. 437; *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 412, 413; *King v. Baldwin*, 2 Johns. Ch. 554; *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 123; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 202, 203; *post*, § 558, 559, 633, 634, 635, 636, 1028; [* *Pledge v. Buss*, *Johnson*, Eng. Ch. 663.]

³ [* *Jones v. Quinpiack Bank*, 29 Conn. 25.

as held among the profession. It is generally understood that the surety holds all securities in trust, not only for the other sureties, but for the creditor also, until the debt is paid.¹ * In a late English case² the surety upon a bond to secure a money debt, was himself secured by another bond of indemnity entered into by the principal debtor's father, who had died having by will devised certain property specifically upon trust to pay the debt. The creditor having applied to the surety, the surety had recourse to the executors, who said they had no funds in hand and that they were unable under the will to raise the money by sale of any portion of the testator's estate, except under a decree of court. It was held that the surety, although he had not actually paid any thing, was entitled to maintain a bill against the executors for administration of the estate, payment of the debt, and indemnity, and that in such a proceeding it was not requisite to make all the creditors of the estate parties of the bill, or *quasi* parties, by filing it on behalf of all who might choose to come in under it.]

§ 499 *a.* The principle seems in former times to have been carried farther by courts of equity, and to have authorized the surety to insist upon an assignment, not merely of collateral securities, properly speaking, but of collateral incidents, and dependent rights, growing out of the original debt. Thus, where the principal in a bond had been sued, and gave bail, and judgment was obtained against the principal, and also against the bail, by the creditor, and afterwards the sureties on the original bonds (who had counter-bonds) were compelled to pay it; and then brought their bill in equity to have the benefit of the judgment of the creditor against the bail, by having it assigned to them; it was decreed by the court accordingly. So that although the bail were themselves but sureties, as between themselves and the principal debtor, yet, coming in the room of the principal debtor, as to the creditor, it was held, that they likewise came in the room of the principal debtor as to the sureties on the original bond.³ This decision consequently established, that the original sureties had precisely the same rights

¹ *New Bedford Savings Institution v. Fairhaven Bank*, 9 Allen, 175, 178, and cases cited by CHAPMAN, J.

² *Wooldridge v. Norris*, Law Rep. 6 Eq. 410. The case of *Champion v. Brown*, 6 Johns. Ch. 398, 406, was cited by counsel for plaintiff in support of the proceeding.]

³ *Parsons v. Briddock*, 2 Vern. 608: *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 22.

that the creditor had ; and were to stand in his place. The original sureties had no direct contract or engagement by which the bail were bound to them ; but only a claim against the bail, through the medium of the creditor, to all whose rights, and the power of enforcing them, they were held to be entitled.¹ This decision has been much questioned ; and although it may be distinguishable in its circumstances from others on which we shall have occasion to comment, yet it must now be deemed to be much shaken in point of authority.² But, however this may be, it seems certain, that a surety upon a second bond, given as collateral security for the original bond, has a right, upon payment of his own bond, to be substituted to the original creditor, as to the first bond, and to have an assignment thereof, as an independent subsisting obligation for the debt.³

§ 499 b. Another point of more extensive importance in practice is, whether a surety, who pays off the debt of the principal, for which he is bound, is entitled to require the creditor, upon such payment to make an assignment to him of the debt, and of the instrument by which it is evidenced. It seems formerly to have been thought, that he had such a right ; and the general language of some of the authorities, that the surety is in such cases entitled to every remedy which the creditor had against the principal, was supposed fully to justify and support this conclusion.⁴ But the doctrine is now fully established⁵ that the surety has

¹ *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 22.

² *Hodgson v. Shaw*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 189. But see *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 22 ; *Dowbiggin v. Bourne*, 1 Younge, 111, 114, 115 ; s. c. 2 Younge & Coll. 462, 472, 473.

³ *Hodgson v. Shaw*, 3 Mylne & Keene, 183, 193 ; *ante*, § 493, note ; *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 413 ; *Avery v. Petten*, 7 Johns. Ch. 211. See *Himes v. Keller*, 3 Watts & Serg. 401. [* This is, perhaps, questionable.]

⁴ *Ex parte Crispe*, 1 Atk. 135 ; *Parsons v. Briddock*, 2 Vern. 608 ; *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 12, 21, 22 ; *Dowbiggin v. Bourne*, 1 Younge, 411 ; s. c. 2 Younge & Coll. 464 ; *Butcher v. Churchill*, 15 Ves. 567, 575, 676 ; *Ex parte Rushforth*, 10 Ves. 409, 414 ; *Robinson v. Wilson*, 2 Mad. 464 ; *Craythorne v. Swinburne*, 14 Ves. 160, 162. See also *Hodgson v. Shaw*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 183, 185 ; *Hotham v. Stone*, 1 Turner & Russ. 226, note ; *Butcher v. Churchill*, 14 Ves. 568, 575, 576.

⁵ [But it seems not in America. The doctrine of *Copis v. Middleton* has not generally been received with approbation by the American courts, and it has here often been held, that, although the lien or security be extinguished at law, yet, for the benefit of the security, it continues in equity in full force. See *Lathrop*

no such right to be enforced in equity, and that he cannot insist upon any such assignment. The ground is, that by the payment of the debt, the title derived under the instrument has become extinguished, and *functus officio*; and, therefore, an assignment thereof would be utterly useless; and if the surety should afterwards sue for the debt at law, in the name of the creditor, the principal might plead such payment in bar of the action.¹ In such a case it would make no difference in the right of the surety to sue, that upon payment of the debt, he had procured an assignment thereof to be made to a third person, instead of to himself, for his benefit.² Neither would it make any difference, that several judgments had been obtained by the creditor against the principal and surety, and that the latter had paid the debt on the judgment against him, and then sought an assignment to be made of the judgment against the principal; for the judgment would be effectually extinguished by such payment; and the surety would not be permitted to avail himself of it against the principal.³

§ 499 *c.* The error of the contrary opinion, if indeed, upon the principles of enlarged equity, any there be, seems to have arisen from confounding the right of the surety, on payment of the debt, to be substituted for the creditor, and to have an assignment of any independent collateral securities, with the supposed right to have the original debt assigned. Such independent collateral securities may well be required to be assigned by the creditor, in favor of the surety; because, in many cases, the principal would not be entitled to have a retransfer thereof from the surety, without

& Dale's Appeal, 1 Barr, 512; Powell *v.* White, 11 Leigh, 309; Speiglemyer *v.* Crawford, 6 Paige, 254; Rodgers *v.* McClure, 4 Gratt. 81; McCleary *v.* Beirne, 10 Leigh, 395; Perkins *v.* Kershaw, 1 Hill, Ch. 344; 2 Bland, 509; 1 Harr. 374; Tinsley *v.* Anderson, 3 Call, 329; Burns *v.* Huntington Bank, 1 Penn. 395; Fleming *v.* Beaver, 2 Rawle, 132; Croft *v.* Moore, 9 Watts, 417; Cuyler *v.* Ensworth, 6 Paige, 32; Matthews *v.* Aiken, 1 Const. 595.]

¹ Woffington *v.* Sparks, 2 Ves. 569; Gammon *v.* Stone, 1 Ves. 339; Copis *v.* Middleton, 1 Turn. & Russ. 224, 229; Jones *v.* Davids, 4 Russ. 297; Hodgson *v.* Shaw, 3 Mylne & Keen, 183; Hudson *v.* Stalwood, Cas. Temp. Hard. 133; Davis *v.* Perrine, 4 Edw. Ch. 65; Morrison *v.* Marvin, 6 Ala. 797; Briley *v.* Sugg, 1 Dev. & Batt. 366; Armitage *v.* Baldwin, 5 Beav. 278.

² See Reed *v.* Norris, 2 Mylne & Craig, 361; Jones *v.* Davids, 4 Russ. 277; Copis *v.* Middleton, 1 Turn. & Russ. 224, 229. But see Butcher *v.* Churchill, 14 Ves. 568, 575, 576.

³ Dowbiggin *v.* Bourne, 2 Younge & Coll. 464. But see Hill *v.* Kelly, 1 Ridg. L. & Schoales, 265.

paying him the sums advanced by him to the creditor, as a matter of equity between the parties. But the assignment of the debt itself, which had been already paid, would be a mere nullity in equity, as well as at law, since it could not have, in the hands of the surety, any subsisting obligation.¹

¹ This whole subject is examined in a masterly manner by Lord Eldon, in *Copis v. Middleton*, 1 Turn. & Russ. 224, 229, 231, and by Lord Brougham, in *Hodgson v. Shaw*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 183. In a former case, Lord Eldon said: "It is a general rule, that in equity a surety is entitled to the benefit of all the securities which the creditor has against the principal. But then, the nature of those securities must be considered. When there is a bond merely, if an action was brought upon the bond, it would appear, upon oyer of the bond, that the debt was extinguished. The general rule, therefore, must be qualified, by considering it to apply to such securities as continue to exist, and do not get back, upon payment, to the person of the principal debtor. In the case, for instance, where, in addition to the bond, there is a mortgage with a covenant, on the part of the principal debtor, to pay the money, the surety, paying the money, would be entitled to say, I have lost the benefit of the bond; but the creditor has a mortgage, and I have a right to the benefit of the mortgaged estate which has not got back to the debtor." Lord Brougham, speaking on the same subject, said: "The rule here is undoubted, and it is one founded on the plainest principles of natural reason and justice, that the surety paying off a debt shall stand in the place of the creditor, and have all the rights which he has, for the purpose of obtaining his reimbursement. It is hardly possible to put this right of substitution too high; and the right results more from equity than from contract or *quasi* contract; unless in so far as the known equity may be supposed to be imported into any transaction, and so to raise a contract by implication. The doctrine of the court, in this respect, was luminously expounded in the argument of Sir Samuel Romilly, in *Craythorne v. Swinburne*; and Lord Eldon, in giving judgment in that case, sanctioned the exposition by his full approval. 'A surety,' to use the language of Sir Samuel Romilly's reply, 'will be entitled to every remedy which the creditor has against the principal debtor, to enforce every security and all means of payment; to stand in the place of the creditor, not only through the medium of contract, but even by means of securities, entered into without the knowledge of the surety; having a right to have those securities transferred to him, though there was no stipulation for that, and to avail himself of all those securities against the debtor.' I have purposely taken this statement of the right, because it is there placed as high as it ever can be placed; and yet, it is quite consistent with the principle of *Copis v. Middleton*. Thus, the surety paying is entitled to every remedy, which the creditor has. But can the creditor be said to have any specialty after the bond is gone by payment? The surety may enforce any security against the debtor, which the creditor has; but by the supposition there is no security to enforce, for the payment has extinguished it. He has a right to have all the securities transferred to him; but there are, in the case supposed, none to transfer. They are absolutely gone. He may avail himself of all those securities against the debtor, but his own act of payment has left

§ 499 *d.* Upon reasoning somewhat analogous, to that the supposed error of which we have been considering, it was formerly held, that if a surety upon a bond debt should discharge it, he would be entitled to be considered as substituted for the original creditors, as a specialty creditor of his principal; and, consequently, in the marshalling of the assets of the principal, he would, as to the debt so paid, have a priority over simple contract creditors.¹ But upon this point, also, a different doctrine is now estab-

none of which he can take advantage." See also *Dowbiggin v. Bourne*, 2 *Younge & Coll.* 462, 471. It is observable, that the whole of this reasoning proceeds upon the ground, that by the payment by the surety, the original debt is extinguished. Now, that is precisely what the Roman law (as we shall presently see) denied; and it treated the transaction between the surety and the creditor according to the presumed intention of the parties, to be, not so much a payment as a sale of the debt. 1 *Domat*, B. 3, tit. 1, § 6, art. 1; *post*, § 500, and § 635, 636, 637. It is not wonderful, that courts of equity, with this enlarged doctrine in their view, which is in entire conformity to the intention of the parties, as well as to the demands of justice, should have struggled to adopt it into the equity jurisprudence of England. The opposing doctrine is founded more on technical rules, than on any solid reasoning founded in general equity. In truth, courts of equity, in many cases, do adopt it, and act upon it, as in cases where they give the right of substitution to particular parties, where there are two funds, out of one of which a creditor has insisted upon receiving satisfaction, to the disappointment of the parties who have no claim upon the other fund. *Ante*, § 499; *post*, § 633 to 640. Whether it might not have been as wise for courts of equity to have followed out the Roman law to its full extent, instead of adopting a modified rule, which stops, or may stop, short of some of the purposes of reciprocal justice, it is now too late to inquire, and therefore, the discussion would be useless. See *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 *Johns. Ch.* 409, 412, 413, 414; *ante*, § 493, note. Sir William Grant, in *Butcher v. Churchill* (14 *Ves.* 568, 575, 576), seems to have proceeded upon the principle of the Roman law, in holding that the assignment of a bond to a surety, who had compounded the debt with the creditor, and taken the assignment, ought to be upheld in equity, however it might be at law, for the purpose of securing to him the amount he had paid on the bond and interest. But see *Armitage v. Baldwin* (5 *Beav.* 278), where the surety paid the debt due to the creditor after the creditor had obtained judgment for it against the principal debtor, and also another judgment against his bail in that action, and upon such payment the surety took an assignment from the creditor of both judgments — Lord Langdale thought, that as the bill alleged that the surety had "duly paid and satisfied the original judgment," he could not maintain a bill against the bail on the judgment against him, to charge the estate of the bail. But his lordship suggested, that the plaintiff might, by a proper proceeding, ultimately succeed in establishing a right against the estate of the bail.

¹ *Hotham v. Stone*, 1 *Turn. & Russ.* 226, note; *Robinson v. Wilson*, 2 *Mad.*

lished; and it is held that a surety, so paying a bond debt, will be treated, in marshalling assets, as a mere simple contract creditor.¹ The ground of this doctrine is, that the surety is not subrogated to the rights of the creditor in such a case (whether he has procured an assignment of the bond, when paid or not); but he is in fact as well as in law, to be deemed only as having paid money for the principal upon the footing of an implied contract of indemnity subsisting between them.² Yet there are many cases in which a

464; *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 22. The case of *Powell's Ex'rs v. White*, 11 Leigh, 309, fully approves this same doctrine.

¹ *Copis v. Middleton*, 1 Turn. & Russ. 224, 229, 231; *Jones v. Davids*, 4 Russ. 277; *Foster v. Athneim*, 1 Ala. 302; *Hodgson v. Shaw*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 183. [*Contra*, in most American States. See *Eppes v. Randolph*, 2 Call, 125; 3 id. 329; *West v. Belcher*, 5 Munf. 187; *McMahon v. Fawcett*, 2 Rand. 514; *Watts v. Kinney*, 3 Leigh, 272; *Wheatley v. Calhoun*, 12 Leigh, 265; *Litterdale v. Robinson*, 2 Brock. 161; 12 Wheat. 594; *Pride v. Boyce*, 1 Rice, Eq. 276; *Schultz v. Carter*, 1 Speer's Eq. 534; *Croft v. Moore*, 9 Watts, 451; *Lathrop & Dale's Appeal*, 1 Barr, 512; *Enders v. Brune*, 4 Rand. 438; *Grider v. Payne*, 9 Dana, 188; *Dias v. Bouchand*, 3 Edw. Ch. 485; *United States v. Hunter*, 5 Mason, 62.]

² *Ibid.* Lord Eldon, in *Copis v. Middleton*, 1 Turn. & Russ. 228, said: "I take the present case to be simply this. Upon loans of money to A., joint bonds were given by A. and B., B. being surety for A.; two of the bonds were paid off by B. in the lifetime of A.; now, if one of two joint obligors, being a surety, pays off the debt in the lifetime of the principal, he is at law merely a simple contract creditor of the principal; and, if the principal lives for twenty years after the payment of the debt, he continues during all that time to be at law a simple contract creditor only. Then the question is, Whether, by the death of the principal, he is to be converted, in a court of equity, into a specialty creditor against his assets. With respect to the bond paid off after the death of the principal, the questions are: Whether, inasmuch as, at the death of principal, there was money due upon the bond, there was an equity on the part of the surety to compel the creditor to go in against the assets of the principal; and, Whether, there having been no interposition for that purpose, the right of the surety to stand in the place of the creditor can now be maintained. When it is considered that this was a joint bond, and that no action at law could be maintained except against the surety, the surviving debtor, it is a strong proposition to say, that the surviving debtor is to be considered in equity as a specialty creditor against the assets of the deceased debtor." And, again, in p. 230, 231, 232, he said: "The facts of this case are simply these. Two individuals gave a bond, the one as the principal and the other as surety; no other assurance was executed at the time; no mortgage was made to secure the debt; no counter-bond was given by the principal to the surety; and the question to be decided is, Whether the surety, having paid the bond after it was due, is a simple contract or a specialty creditor? I understand it to have been the opinion of the Master, an opinion founded on

surety, paying a debt, will be entitled to stand in the place of the creditor, or to obtain the full benefit of all the proceedings of the

one or two cases, which have been stated, that the surety was to be considered as a specialty creditor, to stand in the place of the person whom he paid. That doctrine appears to me to be contrary to all that has been settled during the whole time I have been in this court. Every thing that was arranged in bankruptcy before the late statute, enabling the surety to prove every thing determined before, appears to me to have authorized the court to consider it quite clear, that if there was nothing in the case beyond what I have stated, the surety, having paid the bond, could be nothing more than a simple contract creditor in respect of that payment. The bond was not assigned to anybody in consideration of a sum of money paid, which was one way we used to manage these things; there was no counter-bond given, which was another way in which we used to manage these things; so that if the surety paid one bond, he became instantly a specialty creditor by virtue of the other bond. If any suit was now instituted, I apprehend the payment of the bond would show that the bond was gone. There has been a case cited, where, upon the general ground that a surety is entitled to the benefit of all securities which the creditor has against the principal, it seems to have been thought that the surety was entitled to be, as it were, a bond creditor, by virtue of the bond. I take it to be exceedingly clear, if, at the time the bond is given, a mortgage is also made for securing the debt, the surety, if he pays the bond, has a right to stand in the place of the mortgagee; and, as the mortgagor cannot get back his estate again without a conveyance, that security remains a valid and effectual security, notwithstanding the bond debt is paid. But if there is nothing but the bond, my notion is, that, as the law says, that bond is discharged by the payment of what was due upon it, the bond is gone, and cannot be set up." Lord Brougham, in *Hodgson v. Shaw*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 190, 191, 192, still more elaborately expounded the doctrine. "When" (said he) "a person pays off a bond in which he is either co-obligor or bound *subsidiariè*, he has, at law, an action against the principal for money paid to his use; and he can have nothing more. The joint obligation towards the creditor is held to give to the principal notice of the payment, and also to prove his consent or authority to the making that payment. This is necessary for enabling any man, who pays another's debt, to come against that other; because a person cannot make himself the creditor of another by volunteering to discharge his obligations. But beyond this claim, which is on simple contract merely, there exists none against the principal by the surety, who pays his debt; nor, when the matter is closely viewed, ought there to exist any other. The obligation, by specialty, is incurred, not towards the surety, even in the event of his paying, but only towards the obligee. And there is no natural reason why, because I bind myself under seal to pay another person's debt, the creditor requiring a security of that high nature, I should, therefore, have as high a security against the principal debtor. If I had chosen to demand it, I might have taken a similar obligation, when I became so bound. And if I omitted to do so, I can only be considered as possessing the rights which arise from having paid money for him, which I had voluntarily, and without consideration, undertaken to pay. The case standing thus at law, do considerations of equity make any alteration in its aspect?" His lordship then proceeded to state what is contained

creditor against the principal. Thus, for example, if the creditor, in case of the bankruptcy of the principal, has proved his debt before the commissioners, and then the surety pays the debt, the latter will be entitled to the dividends declared on his estate, and the creditor will be held to be his trustee for this purpose.¹ So, the surety may compel the creditor to go in and prove his debt, before the commissioner; and then, if he pays the whole debt, the creditor will in like manner become a trustee of the dividends for him.² [So, where a surety for the purchase-money of land, pays the debt, he is subrogated to the vendor's lien on the land for the unpaid purchase-money.³] In cases of this sort courts of equity seem to be regulated by the same principles, which govern their interference, in favor of sureties, to compel creditors to proceed in the first instance against the principal for the recovery of their debts.⁴

in the passage already cited *ante*, § 499 c, note 1, p. 507, and then added: "Living the principal debtor, the surety could only bring *indebitatus assumpsit* for the money he had paid to that principal's use. The death of that debtor cannot clothe him with a higher title. Living the debtor, the creditor could not have assigned the bond on payment by the surety; for there was no longer any thing to assign. The death of the debtor cannot surely operate a revivor of the specialty, enable the creditor to assign it, or the court to hold it assigned in equity, and empower the surety to sue upon it the executors or administrators of him, who, had he chanced to survive, never could have been sued, except upon the money counts in an action of *assumpsit*. Observe the consequence that would have followed from any other principles, while the law of debtor and creditor continued, as it was till the recent alteration, and when landed estates were not real assets for payment of simple contract debts. If the principal debtor continued alive, the surety could not in any way touch his real estates, except through the medium of a judgment. But if he happened to die, his real estates became assets, although the law had never been changed. There can be no doubt, therefore, with respect to the principle of *Copis v. Middleton*; and Lord Eldon expressed himself without any hesitation in that case, though pressed with the authority of Sir William Grant in *Hotham v. Stone*, upon which he remarked, that the case had been appealed and compromised without coming to an argument." But see in America the case of *Powell's Ex'rs v. White*, 11 Leigh, 309, which upholds the old doctrine.

¹ *Ex parte* Rushforth, 10 Ves. 409; *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 12, 22, 23; *Watkins v. Flanagan*, 3 Russ. 421; *Ex parte* Houston, 2 G. & Jamieson, 36; *Ex parte* Gee, 1 G. & Jamieson, 330.

² *Ex parte* Rushforth, 10 Ves. 409, 414; *Wright v. Simpson*, 6 Ves. 734.

³ *Eddy v. Traver*, 6 Paige, 521; *Welch v. Parran*, 2 Gill, 320; *Magruder v. Peter*, 11 Gill & Johns. 219; *Kleiser v. Scott*, 6 Dana, 137; *Burk v. Chishman*, 3 B. Monroe, 50; *In re McGill*, 6 Barr, 504.

⁴ *Ante*, § 327; *post*, § 639.

[* § 499 *e*. The general principle that the surety, upon payment of the debt is entitled to be subrogated to all the rights of the creditor is extensively discussed and fully maintained by the New York Court of Appeals.¹ This was where the creditor held a chattel mortgage as collateral security for a debt for the payment of which the plaintiff stood as surety, and after paying the debt the court held he was entitled to stand in the place of the creditor in all respects as to the chattel mortgage, and enforce it to the same extent and in the same mode he might have done. But where two sureties agreed among themselves to assume the debt, and accordingly paid one-half each, it was held, that one of them was not entitled to the benefit of securities thereafter taken for his own indemnity.² But before any severance of interest each surety is entitled to the benefit of all the securities held either by the creditor or by the other sureties; and the creditor is also entitled to the benefit of all securities held by the sureties or either of them.³ Where a creditor who is also surety takes security both for the debt and his liability as surety, he is entitled to have his own debt first paid, in

¹ [* *Lewis v. Palmer*, 28 N. Y. 271.

² *Hall v. Cushman*, 16 N. H. 462.

³ *Paris v. Hulett*, 26 Vt. 308; *Brown v. Ray*, 18 N. H. 102; *Lane v. Stacy*, 8 Allen, 41; *Clapp v. Lebanon Bank*, 46 Penn. St. 88; *Sears v. Leforce*, 17 Iowa, 473. It seems to have been held in some cases that a surety who pays the debt cannot call upon a co-surety to reimburse his share of it, unless the principal is insolvent, which he must allege and prove in order to recover of the co-surety. *Bolling v. Doneghy*, 1 Duvall, 220. The surety is upon payment entitled to subrogation to the judgment recovered against himself and the principal debtor, to be enforced against one who became bail at the request of the principal debtor. *Schutzel's Appeal*, 49 Penn. St. 23. But a surety to a bond for supersedeas does not thereby become a co-surety for the debt with one who was surety for an undertaking to secure the discharge of an attachment in the original action. *Hartwell v. Smith*, 15 Ohio, n. s. 200. Where one surety pays the debt in some specific property the co-surety is only bound to contribute his proportion of the value of such property where that is less than the nominal amount of the debt. *Jones v. Bradford*, 25 Ind. 305.

And where some of the stockholders are made to pay the debt of a corporation under the provisions of the statute, the other stockholders may be compelled in equity to contribute their proportion of the money thus paid, according to the number of shares held by each. *Erickson v. Nesmith*, 46 N. H. 371. In regard to bills in equity to compel an account of rents and profits by the mortgagee in possession and for redemption, see *Hall v. Hall*, 46 N. H. 240. A fraudulent vendor of land, to avoid his debts, cannot compel the vendee to account for the land or the use of it. *Sweet v. Timloe*, 52 Barb. 271. As to the extent of an account, see *Shindel's Appeal*, 57 Penn. St. 43.

full, before he applies any portion of the security for the benefit of his co-sureties.¹ But one may become surety for a former surety, and not for the principal debtor.²]

§ 500. Upon this subject a far more liberal and comprehensive doctrine pervades the Roman law. Not only is the surety by that law entitled in such cases to the benefit of all the collateral securities taken by the creditor; but he is also entitled to be substituted as to the very debt itself, to the creditor, by way of cession or assignment. And upon such cession or assignment upon payment of the debt by the surety, the debt is in favor of the surety, treated not so much as paid, as sold; not as extinguished, but as transferred with all its original obligatory force against the principal.³ “Fidejussoribus succurri solet, ut stipulator compellatur ei, qui solidum solvere paratus est, vendere cæterorum nomina. Cum is, qui et reum et fidejussores habens, ab uno ex fidejussoribus accepta pecunia, præstat actiones; poterit quidem dici, nullas jam esse, cum suum perceperit, et perceptione omnes liberati sunt. Sed non ita est; non enim in solutum accepit, sed quodammodo nomen debitoris vendidit. Et ideo habet actiones, quia tenetur ad id ipsum, ut præstet actiones.”⁴ Here we have the doctrine distinctly put, the objection to it stated, and the ground upon which its solution depends affirmed. The reasoning may seem a little artificial; but it has a deep foundation in natural justice. The same doctrine stands in substance approved in all the countries which derive their jurisprudence from the civil law.⁵

§ 501. The Roman law carried its doctrines yet farther, in furtherance of the great principles of equity. It held the creditor bound not to deprive himself of the power to cede his rights and

¹ *Brown v. Ray*, 18 N. H. 102.

² *Adams v. Flanagan*, 36 Vt. 400; *Keith v. Goodwin*, 31 id. 268.]

³ Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, n. 275, 280, 281, 428, 429, 430, 519, 520, 521, 522, [n. 556, 557, 558, 559 of the French editions].

⁴ Dig. Lib. 46, tit. 1, l. 17, 36; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 46, tit. 1, n. 46; *ante*, § 327, 494; *post*, § 635 to 638; 1 Domat, B. 3, tit. 1, § 3, art. 6, 7; id. § 6, art. 6, 7; Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, n. 275, 280, 281, 428, 429, 430, 519, 520, 521, 522, [n. 556, 557, 558, 559 of the French editions].

⁵ Voet, ad Pand. lib. 46, tit. 1, § 27, 29, 30; Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, n. 275, 280, 281, 427, 428, 429, 430, 519, 520, 522, [n. 555, 556, 557 of the French editions]; Huber, Prælect. Inst. Lib. 3, tit. 21, n. 8; 1 Bell, Comm. B. 3, Pt. 1, ch. 3, § 3, p. 264, &c., art. 283, 4th edit.; Ersk. Inst. B. 3, tit. 3, art. 68; 1 Kames, Eq. 122, 124.

securities to the surety, who should pay him the debt; and, if by any voluntary and unnecessary act of his own, such a cession became impracticable, the surety might, by what was technically called *exceptio cedendarum actionum*, bar the creditor of so much of his demand, as the surety might have received by a cession or assignment of his liens and rights of action against the principal debtor. “Si creditor a debitore culpa sua causa ceciderit, propè est, ut actione mandati nihil a mandatore consequi debeat; cum ipsius vitio acciderit, ne mandatori possit actionibus cedere.”¹ But this qualification should be added, that a mere omission by the creditor to collect the debt due of the hypothecated property, so that it is lost by his laches, will not discharge the sureties; but the creditor must be guilty of some wrongful act, as by a release or fraudulent surrender of the pledge, in order to discharge the surety.²

§ 502. The same doctrine has been in some measure transfused into the English law in an analogous form, not indeed by requiring an assignment or cession of the debt to be made; but by putting the surety, paying the debt, under some circumstances, in the place of the creditor.³ And if the creditor should knowingly have

¹ Dig. Lib. 46, tit. 2, l. 95, § 11; Pothier, Pand. Lib. 46, tit. 1, n. 46, 47; Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, n. 275, 280, 428, 429, 430, 519, 520, 521, 521 B., 522 [n. 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560 of the French editions]; Cheeseborough v. Millard, 1 Johns. Ch. 414; Stevens v. Cooper, 1 Johns. Ch. 430, 431; Hayes v. Ward, 4 Johns. Ch. 130. In this last case, Mr. Chancellor Kent said: “According to the doctrine of the civil law, the surety may, *per exceptionem cedendarum actionum*, bar the creditor of so much of his demand, as the surety might have received by an assignment of his lien and right of action against the principal debtor; *provided* the creditor had, by his own unnecessary or improper act, deprived the surety of that resource. The surety, by his very character and relation of surety, has an interest that the mortgage taken from the principal debtor should be dealt with in good faith and held in trust, not only for the creditor’s security, but for the surety’s indemnity. A mortgage so taken by the creditor, is taken and held in trust, as well for the secondary interest of the surety, as for the more direct and immediate benefit of the creditor; and the latter must do no wilful act, either to poison it in the first instance, or to destroy or cancel it afterwards. These are general principles founded in equity, and are contained in the doctrines laid down in Pothier’s Treatise on Obligations, No. 496, 519, 520, to which reference has been made in the former decisions of this court.” See also *post*, § 635, 636. The case of *Macdonald v. Bell*, 3 Moore, Privy Council, 315, 332, fully recognizes the same doctrine.

² *Macdonald v. Bell*, 3 Moore Privy Council, 315, 332. See *Schroepell v. Shaw*, 3 Comst. 457.

³ *Robinson v. Wilson*, 2 Mad. 437. In the case of a Crown debtor, a surety

done any act to deprive the surety of this benefit, the surety, as against him, would be entitled to the same equity as if the act had not been done.¹ On the other hand, if a surety has a counter-bond or security from the principal, the creditor will be entitled to the benefit of it; and may in equity reach such security to satisfy the debt.²

[* § 502 *a.* But where the creditor had lent the principal two sums, of £2,000 and £3,000, on distinct securities, and the plaintiff was surety for the first sum only, it was held, that the plaintiff, upon paying the first sum, was not entitled to have a transfer of the securities held for that sum, until the creditor had also been paid the other sum.³ And if the advances to the principal are made at different times, and the one, without sureties, is made without the knowledge of the sureties for the other advance, it would seem, it will not affect the rule. In the absence of contract the law implies a right in the creditor to hold all his security till the whole sum advanced is paid, and the surety, in that respect, stands in his place.⁴

§ 502 *b.* The surety, by making a new and independent arrangement with the creditor, in regard to the security of the debt, puts himself in the place of a principal and cannot thereafter complain of the creditor for any want of diligence in pursuing the principal. As where, after judgment against him, the surety makes an arrangement with the creditor (irrespective of the principal) for a stay of execution, so long as he kept up certain policies for securing the debt, and afterwards the creditor, having taken the principal debtor in execution, discharged him without payment.⁵ So, too, it has been held, that, where the surety is

is substituted to the prerogative of the Crown, in regard to the debt, and then is admitted to use the Crown remedies. *The King v. Bennet, Wightwick*, 2 to 6; *ante*, § 499 to 499 *d.*, and notes.

¹ *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 130; *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 413, 414; *Stevens v. Cooper*, 1 Johns. Ch. 430; *Miller v. Ord*, 2 Bin. 382; *Alrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 388, 391, 395; *Ex parte Rushforth*, 10 Ves. 409; *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 22.

² 1 Eq. Abridg. p. 93, K. 5. See also *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 D. 6.

³ [* *Farebrother v. Wodehouse*, 23 Beavan, 18.

⁴ *Williams v. Owen*, 13 Simons, 597. But see *Bowker v. Bull*, 1 Simons (N. S.), 29, where it is held that a contract will sometimes be implied, which will deprive the creditor of that advantage. *Post*, § 634 *a.*

⁵ *Reade v. Lowndes*, 23 Beavan, 361. It seems doubtful how far such a dis-

indemnified by his principal, he is not released by any new contract made with, or indulgence shown to, the principal debtor, he being virtually a co-principal.¹ It is here said, "A surety who is fully indemnified by property in his possession, which by the terms of the assignment he is at liberty to convert into money, stands much in the same light, as a surety who has received the amount of the debt in money from the principal. And in such case he is clearly the principal. And so, if he had received half the money, he would be a co-principal; and in all these cases, as it seems to us, on general principles, he should not be permitted to claim the privileges of a strict surety without indemnity."

§ 502 *c.* A surety, who executes a bond on the faith of it being executed by the principal debtor also, cannot be released from his obligation on the ground that the principal has never executed it, provided the principal has executed an instrument on which the surety may sue him and become a specialty creditor of his.²

§ 503. There are many other cases of contribution, in which the jurisdiction of courts of equity is required to be exercised, in order to accomplish the purposes of justice. Thus, for instance, in cases of a deficiency of assets to pay all debts and legacies, if any of the legatees have been paid more than their proportion, before all the debts are ascertained, they may be compelled to refund and contribute, in favor of the unpaid debts, at the instance of creditors, at the instance of other legatees, and in many cases, although not universally, at the instance of the executor himself.³

§ 504. In like manner, contribution lies between partners for any excess, which has been paid by one partner beyond his share, against the other partners, if upon a winding up of the partnership

charge will affect the surety, in any case, unless it be regarded as a technical discharge of the debt.

¹ *Smith v. Estate of Steele*, 25 Vt. 427. See also *Chilton v. Robbins*, 4 Ala. 223.

² *Cooper v. Evans*, Law Rep. 4 Eq. 45.]

³ *Ante*, § 90, 92; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 364; *id.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 518; *Noel v. Robinson*, 1 Vern. 94, and Mr. Raithby's notes, *ibid.*; *Walcott v. Hall*, 2 Bro. Ch. 305; *Anon.*, 1 P. Will. 495, and Mr. Cox's note; *Newman v. Barton*, 2 Vern. 205, and Mr. Raithby's note; *Edwards v. Freeman*, 2 P. Will. 447; *Hardwick v. Wind*, 1 Anst. 112; *Davis v. Davis*, 1 Dick. 32; *Jewson v. Grant*, 3 Swanst. 659; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 3 V. 6. See also on the subject of contribution, the Reporter's note to *Averall v. Wade*, *Lloyd & Goold*, 264; *ante*, § 492.

affairs, such a balance appears in his favor ; or, if, upon a dissolution, he has been compelled to pay any sum, for which he ought to be indemnified. The cases in which a recovery can be had at law by way of contribution between partners are very few, and stand upon special circumstances. The usual, and indeed almost the only, effectual remedy is in equity, where an account of all the partnership transactions can be taken ; and the remedy to ascertain and adjust the balance is, in a just sense, plain, adequate, and complete.¹ It is under the same circumstances, that an action of account at the common law lies ; but that, as we have already seen, is in most cases a very cumbersome, inconvenient, and tardy remedy. The same remark applies to an action of covenant on sealed articles of partnership, or an action of assumpsit upon unsealed articles, where there have been any breaches of the articles ; for there may be many breaches of them, during the continuance of the partnership, which scarcely admit of adequate redress in this way.² This subject will, however, hereafter present itself in a more enlarged form.³

§ 505. Contribution also lies between joint-tenants, tenants in common, and part-owners, of ships and other chattels, for all charges and expenditures incurred for the common benefit. But it seems unnecessary to dwell upon these cases, and others of a like nature, as they embrace nothing more than a plain application of principles already fully expounded.⁴ We may conclude this head with the remark, that the remedial justice of courts of equity, in all cases of apportionment and contribution, is so complete, and so flexible in its adaptation to all the particular circumstances and equities, that it has, in a great measure, superseded all efforts to obtain redress in any other tribunals.

§ 506. LIENS also give rise to matters of account ; and although this is not the sole, or indeed the necessary, ground of the interference of courts of equity ; yet, directly or incidentally, it becomes a most important ingredient in the remedial justice ad-

¹ See Collyer on Partnership, ch. 8, § 2, 4, p. 143, 157, 162 ; Gow on Partn. ch. 2, § 3, 4, p. 92 to 141. See *Wright v. Hunter*, 1 East, 20 ; *Sells v. Hubbell's Administrators*, 2 Johns. Ch. 397 ; *Wright v. Hunter*, 5 Ves. 792.

² See *Duncan v. Lyon*, 3 Johns. Ch. 362 ; *Niven v. Spickerman*, 12 Johns. 401 ; *Gow on Partn. ch. 2, § 3, p. 92 ; Dunham v. Gillis*, 8 Mass. 462.

³ *Post*, § 659 to 683 ; *Story on Partn. § 219 to 242.*

⁴ *Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 V. 6 ; Rogers v. Mackenzie*, 4 Ves. 752 ; *Lingard v. Bromley*, 1 V. & Beam. 114.

ministered by them in cases of this sort. The subject, as a general head of equity jurisdiction, will more properly fall under discussion in another place. But a few considerations, touching matters of account involved in it, may be here glanced at. A lien is not in strictness either a *jus in re*, or a *jus ad rem*; but it is simply a right to possess and retain property, until some charge attaching to it is paid or discharged.¹ It generally exists in favor of artisans and others, who have bestowed labor and services upon the property, in its repair, improvement, and preservation.² It has also an existence, in many other cases, by the usages of trade; and in maritime transactions, as in cases of salvage and general average.³ It is often created and sustained in equity, where it is unknown at law; as in cases of the sale of lands, where a lien exists for the unpaid purchase-money.⁴ It is not confined to cases of mere labor and services on the very property, or connected therewith; but it often is, by the usage of trade, extended to cases of a general balance of accounts, in favor of factors and others.⁵ Now, it is obvious, that most of these cases must give rise to matters of account; and as no suit is maintainable at law for the property by the owner, until the lien is discharged, and as the nature and amount of the lien often are involved in great uncertainty, a resort to a court of equity, to ascertain and adjust the account, seems, in many cases, absolutely indispensable for the purposes of justice; since, if a tender were made at law, it would be at the peril of the owner; and, if it was less than the amount due, he would inevitably be cast in the suit, and be put to the necessity of a new litigation under more favorable circumstances. So, in many cases, where a lien exists upon various parcels of land, some parts of which have been afterwards sold to different purchasers, and the lien is sought to be enforced upon the lands of the purchaser, it may often become necessary to ascertain what parcels ought pri-

¹ *Brace v. Duchess of Marlborough*, 2 P. Will. 491; *Gilman v. Brown*, 1 Mason, 221; *Ex parte Heywood*, 2 Rose, 355, 357; *post*, § 1215, 1216.

² *Abbott on Shipping*, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 1, 17; *Chase v. Westmore*, 5 M. & Selw. 180.

³ *Abbott on Shipping*, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 1, 17; Pt. 3, ch. 3, § 11; *id.* ch. 10, § 1, 2.

⁴ *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 12, § 1, p. 541 (7th edit.); *id.* ch. 12, § 1, Vol. 2, p. 57 (9th edit.).

⁵ *Faley on Agency*, ch. 2, § 3; *Kruger v. Wilcocks, Ambler*, 252, and *Mr. Blunt's note*; *Green v. Farmer*, 4 Burr. 2218.

marily to be subjected to the lien in exoneration of others; and a bill for this purpose, as well as for an account of the amount of the encumbrance, may be indispensable for the purposes of justice.¹ Cases of pledges present a similar illustration, whenever they involve indefinite and unascertained charges and accounts.

[* 506 *a*. And where policy-holders, whose claims were disputed, deposited the policy as a security, and the depositors submortgaged the same, and subsequently notified the submortgagees to hold the ultimate balance upon the policy, and other securities included in the same mortgage, for the benefit of a bank, and the bank gave them notice to the same effect, it was held that the transaction created a valid security on the insurance money in favor of the bank.² And where foreign principals requested a London firm to buy Mexican bonds and "hold them at their disposal," the principals having paid the money thus advanced, and requested their agents to "keep the bonds in safe custody," which they promised to do; it was held, they had a lien on the bonds, for the general balance of their accounts against the principal.³ But the decree of the Master of the Rolls was reversed by the Lord Chancellor, who held that a general lien can only be maintained in particular trades, where its existence has been judicially declared, as in the case of wharfingers, factors, and bankers, or in other trades where there is express evidence of custom.⁴]

§ 507. Let us, in the next place, bring together some few cases involving accounts, which may arise either from privity of contract or relation, or from adverse or conflicting interests.

§ 508. Under this head the jurisdiction of courts of equity in regard to RENTS AND PROFITS may properly be considered. A great variety of cases of this sort resolve themselves into matters of account, not only when they arise from privity of contract, but also when they arise from adverse claims and titles, asserted by different persons.⁵ Between landlord and tenant accounts often extend

¹ *Skeel v. Spraker*, 8 Paige, 182; *Patty v. Pease*, 8 Paige, 277; *post*, § 634 *a*, 1233 *a*, where the marshalling of securities and priority as to contributions is more fully considered.

² [* *Myers v. United Guarantee & Life Assurance Co.*, 7 De G., M. & G. 112.

³ *Bock v. Goppissen*, 6 Jur. N. S. 547.

⁴ s. c. 7 Jur. N. S. 81.]

⁵ See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3, and note (*k*); *id.* B. 1, ch. 1; *id.* B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*), Bac. Abridg. *Accompt*, B.

over a number of years, where there are any special terms or stipulations in the lease, requiring expenditures on one side and allowances on the other. In such cases, where there are any controverted claims, a resort to courts of equity is often necessary to a due adjustment of the respective rights of each party.¹

§ 509. Mr. Fonblanque asserts that courts of equity, when resorted to for the purpose of an account of mesne profits, will, in many cases, consult the principle of convenience; and will, therefore, sometimes decree it, where the party has not already established his right at law.² To some extent, as in cases of shareholders in real property of a peculiar nature (such as shareholders in the New River Water-Works in England), he is borne out by authority. But there is great reason to question whether the doctrine is generally admissible as a rule in equity, resulting from mere convenience.³ It seems rather to result from the peculiar character of the property where there are many proprietors, in the nature of partners, having a common title to the profits; and therefore, the whole becomes appropriately a matter of account.⁴

§ 510. But another class of cases is still more frequent, arising from tortious or adverse claims and titles.⁵ Thus, where a judgment creditor or a conusee of a recognizance or other statute security has had his execution levied upon the real estate of the judgment debtor or conusor; it may often be necessary to take an account of the rents and profits, in order to ascertain whether, and when, the debt has been satisfied, by a perception of those rents and profits.⁶ At law, the tenant under an *elegit* is not bound to answer in account, except for the extended value. But, in courts of equity, as the *elegit* is a mere security for the debt, the tenant will be compelled to account for the rents and profits which

¹ O'Conner v. Spaight, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 305. See The King v. The Three Fishers of Whitstable, 7 East, 353, 356.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3, note (k).

³ Townsend v. Ash, 3 Atk. 336. See Pulteney v. Warren, 6 Ves. 91, 92; Norton v. Frecker, 1 Atk. 524, 525.

⁴ Adley v. Whitstable Comp. 17 Ves. 324; Lorimer v. Lorimer, 5 Mad. 369.

⁵ Bac. Abridg. *Accompt*, B. The gradual development of equity jurisdiction in cases of tort and mesne profits arising under contracts, trusts, and torts, is well stated in Bac. Abridg. *Accompt*, B.

⁶ Yates v. Hambley, 2 Atk. 362, 363; Owen v. Griffith, Ambl. 520; s. c. 1 Ves. 250.

he has actually received, deducting, of course, all reasonable charges.¹

§ 511. It is observable that, in these cases of *elegit*, there exists a privity in law; and there is an implied trust between the parties. In the ordinary cases of mesne profits, where a clear remedy exists at law, courts of equity will not interfere, but will leave the party to his remedy at law. Some special circumstances are, therefore, necessary, to draw into activity the remedial interference of a court of equity;² and, when these exist, it will interfere, not only in cases arising under contract, but in cases arising under direct or constructive torts. Thus, for instance, if a man intrudes upon an infant's lands, and takes the profits, he is compellable to account for them, and will be treated as a guardian or trustee for the infant.³ And this is but following out the rule of law in the like case; for so greatly does the law favor infants, that if a stranger enters into and occupies an infant's lands, he is compellable, at law, to render an account of the rents and profits, and will be chargeable as guardian or bailiff.⁴

§ 512. Other cases may be easily put where a like remedial justice is administered in equity, but, in all these cases, it will be found that there is some peculiar equitable ground for interference; such as fraud, or accident, or mistake, the want of a discovery, some impediment at law, the existence of a constructive trust, or the necessity of interposing to prevent multiplicity of suits.⁵ It is perfectly clear, that, if there is a trust estate, and the *cestui que trust* comes into equity upon his title to recover the estate, he will be decreed to have the further relief of an account of the rents and

¹ Owen v. Griffith, 1 Ves. 250; Yates v. Hambley, 2 Atk. 362, 363. See 3 Black. Comm. 418 to 420; Taylor v. Earl of Abington, Doug. 472; Com. Dig. Execution, C. 14.

² Tilley v. Bridges, Prec. Ch. 252; 1 Eq. Abridg. 285.

³ Newburgh v. Bickerstaffe, 1 Vern. 295; Carey v. Burtie, 2 Vern. 342; Hutton v. Simpson, 2 Vern. 724; Lockey v. Lockey, Prec. Ch. 518; 1 Eq. Abridg. 7 Pl. 10, 11; id. 280, A.; Bennet v. Whitehead, 2 P. Will. 644; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3, and note (k); Dormer v. Fortescue, 3 Atk. 129, 130.

⁴ Littleton, § 124; Co. Litt. 89 b, 90 a; Pulteney v. Warren, 6 Ves. 88, 89; Com. Dig. Account, A. 2; Dormer v. Fortescue, 3 Atk. 129, 130; Curtis v. Curtis, 2 Bro. Ch. 628, 632; Townsend v. Ash, 3 Atk. 337.

⁵ Ibid.; and Sayer v. Pierce, 1 Ves. 232; Curtis v. Curtis, 2 Bro. Ch. 628, 632, 633; Tilley v. Bridges, Prec. Ch. 252.

profits.¹ So, in the case of bond creditors who come in for a distribution of assets ; they may have an account of rents and profits against the heir in equity ; for it is clear that they have an equity, and yet they are without remedy at law.² So, in the case of dower (of which more will presently be said), if the widow is entitled to dower, and her claim is merely upon a legal title ; but she cannot ascertain the lands out of which she is dowable, and comes into equity for discovery and relief ; she will be entitled to an account of the rents and profits, upon having her title established.³ So if an heir or devisee is compelled to come into equity for a discovery of title-deeds and the ascertainment of his title or to put aside some impediments to his recovery ; there he will be entitled to an account of the rents and profits.⁴

§ 513. Another case connected with torts, is, where a recovery has been had in an ejectment, brought to recover lands, and afterwards the plaintiff is prevented from enforcing his judgment by an injunction, obtained on a bill brought by the tenant, who dies before the bill is finally disposed of. In such a case, at law, the remedy by an action of trespass for the mesne profits is gone by the death of the tenant, as actions of tort do not survive at law. But a court of equity will, in such a case, entertain a bill for an account of the mesne profits, in favor of the plaintiff in ejectment, against the personal representatives of the tenant ; for it is inequitable that his estate should receive the benefit and profits of the property of another person. It would be a reproach to equity, if a man, who has taken the property of another, and disposed of it in his lifetime, should, by his death, throw the proceeds into his own assets, and leave the injured party remediless.⁵ It is true, that the death of the tenant cannot be treated as the case of an accident, against which a court of equity will relieve.⁶ But there seems the most manifest justice in holding, that, where property

¹ *Dormer v. Fortescue*, 3 Atk. 129 ; *Coventry v. Hall*, 2 Ch. 259.

² *Curtis v. Curtis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 628, 629, 633.

³ *Ibid.* ; *Curtis v. Curtis*, 2 Brown, Ch. 620 ; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3, note (k).

⁴ *Dormer v. Fortescue*, 3 Atk. 124 ; *Coventry v. Hall*, 2 Ch. 259 ; *Bennet v. Whitehead*, 2 P. Will. 644 ; *Pulteney v. Warren*, 6 Ves. 88, 89.

⁵ *Bishop of Winchester v. Knight*, 1 P. Will. 407 ; *Lansdowne v. Lansdowne*, 1 Mad. 116.

⁶ *Pulteney v. Warren*, 6 Ves. 88 ; *Garth v. Cotton*, 3 Atk. 755 ; s. c. 1 Ves. 524 ; *id.* 546.

or its proceeds has come to the use of a party, the mere fact that the title has originated in a tort should not prevent the party, and his personal representatives, from rendering an account thereof. And, in truth, this is but following out the principles now adopted in courts of law, where the action for a tort dies with the person; but the right of property in the thing, or its proceeds, survives against the personal representatives.¹

§ 514. There is also another distinct ground, which, although not always followed out by the courts of equity in England, is, of itself, sufficient to maintain the jurisdiction; and that is, that in these cases a discovery is sought: and if it is effectual, then, to prevent multiplicity of suits, the court ought to decree at once the payment of the mesne profits, which have been thus ascertained.² But a definite and very satisfactory ground to maintain the jurisdiction in such cases is, that it is inequitable that a party, who suspends the just operation of a suit or judgment by an injunction, should thereby deprive the other party of his rights and profits, belonging to the suit or judgment, if the merits turn out to be ultimately in favor of the latter. He ought, under such circumstances, to be compelled to put the plaintiff in the original suit in the same situation as if no injunction had intervened.³

[* § 514 a. And a person who enters into wrongful possession of property under an unjust bargain will be dealt with more severely than a mortgagee in possession.⁴ Where the party is a volunteer, and stands in the position of a wrong-doer, he should be held to account for all which might have been made from the premises, and all doubts should be solved against him; but where the estate is thrown upon one in the necessary enforcement of his legal rights, or comes to his possession as trustee, he should only be required to act in good faith, and with reasonable care and skill, and to account for what he, in fact, realizes. And where a court of equity interferes, by way of injunction, to restrain further

¹ *Hambley v. Trott*, Cowp. 371; *Lansdowne v. Lansdowne*, 1 Mad. 116. There are recent statutes, both in England and America, which alter the common law in this respect. But this change has not taken away the original jurisdiction in equity.

² See *Jesus College v. Bloom*, 3 Atk. 362; s. c. *Ambler*, 54; *Whitfield v. Bewit*, 2 P. Will, 240; s. c. 3 P. Will. 267; *Dormer v. Fortescue*, 2 Atk. 282; s. c. 3 Atk. 124; *Townsend v. Ash*, 3 Atk. 336, 337.

³ *Pulteney v. Warren*, 6 Ves. 88, 92.

⁴ [* *Robertson v. Norris*, 5 Jur. n. s. 1238.

injury to land, it will grant compensation for the injury already committed, either by reference to the master, or by an issue, *quantum damnificatus*.^{1]}

§ 515. Cases of WASTE by tenants and other persons afford another illustration of the same doctrine.² Thus, where one held customary lands of a manor, and opened a copper mine in the lands, and dug the ore, and sold great quantities of it in his lifetime, and then died, and his heir continued digging and disposing of the ore in like manner; upon a bill brought against the executor for an account, and against the heir also for an account, it was decided, that the bill was maintainable, both against the executor and the heir. Lord Cowper seems to have entertained the jurisdiction upon general principles, and especially upon the ground that the tenant was a sort of fiduciary of the lord; and it was against conscience, that he should shelter himself or his representative from responsibility for a breach of trust in a court of equity.³

[* § 515 a. Questions of considerable difficulty and importance often occur, in regard to the rights of the owner of the fee to mines and minerals, either where there is or is not a special reservation of such interest in the demise or conveyance. This question is considerably discussed in the late case of *Bell v. Wilson*, upon a reservation in a conveyance in fee-simple, of "all mines and seams of coal, and other mines, metals, or minerals, as well opened as not opened, within or under" the lands conveyed. It was held that a bed of freestone which was at a distance of from six feet to forty feet beneath the surface was included in the reservation, but that it could not be worked by open quarrying, but only by underground working.^{4]}

§ 516. The case of *Bishop of Winchester v. Knight*, has been supposed to have been decided upon the ground, that, as to the executor, there was no remedy at law; and that, as to the heir,

¹ *Bird v. Railroad Co.*, 8 Rich. Eq. 56.]

² We here speak of *legal waste*; for, if the waste be equitable only, of course a remedy lies in equity. *Lansdowne v. Lansdowne*, 1 Mad. 116; *Marquis of Ormond v. Kynerley*, 5 Mad. 369. [In *Kingham v. Lee*, 15 Sim. 396, the case of *Marquis of Ormond v. Kynerley*, was disapproved.] An injunction to stay waste will lie in favor of one tenant in common against another. *Hawley v. Clowes*, 2 Johns. Ch. 122.

³ *Bishop of Winchester v. Knight*, 1 P. Will. 407; s. c. 2 Eq. Abridg. 226.

⁴ [* 11 Jur. n. s. 437, 2 Drew. & S. 395; s. c. 12 Jur. n. s. 263.]

there was some fraud or concealment, and a necessity for a discovery; or that, as to him, an injunction was sought. Without some one of these ingredients, it would be difficult to maintain the case in its apparent extent; for there would otherwise be a complete and perfect remedy at law. And in the later commentaries upon this case, this has been the distinctive ground upon which its authority has been admitted.¹ Lord Hardwicke seems to have thought, that it being the case of a mine might distinguish it from other cases of waste; as the digging of mines is a sort of trade; and then it would fall within the general doctrine, as to an account in matters of trade.²

§ 517. Cases of waste, by the cutting down of timber by tenants, have given rise to questions of the same sort, in regard to jurisdiction. In some of the cases upon this subject, it seems to have been maintained, that, although the remedy for waste is ordinarily at law, yet if a discovery is wanted, that alone, if it turns out to be important, and is obtained, will carry the ulterior jurisdiction to account, in order to prevent multiplicity of suits;³ a ground, the sufficiency of which it seems difficult to resist upon general principles.⁴ But other decisions, and those which are relied on, as constituting the established doctrine of the court, are differently qualified; and seem to require, in order to maintain the jurisdiction for an account, that there should be a prayer for an injunction to prevent future waste.⁵

§ 518. Lord Hardwicke, upon one occasion,⁶ expounded this ground of jurisdiction very clearly (although he does not seem himself afterwards to have been satisfied with so limiting it⁷), and said: "Waste is a loss for which there is a proper remedy by

¹ *Pulteney v. Warren*, 6 Ves. 89, 90; *Jesus College v. Bloom*, 3 Atk. 262; s. c. *Ambler*, 54.

² *Jesus College v. Bloom*, 3 Atk. 262; s. c. *Ambler*, 54; *Story v. Lord Windsor*, 2 Atk. 630; *Sayer v. Pierce*, 1 Ves. 232.

³ *Whitfield v. Bewit*, 2 P. Will. 240; *Garth v. Cotton*, 3 Atk. 751; s. c. 1 Ves. 524, 546; *Lee v. Alston*, 1 Bro. Ch. 194; *Eden on Injunct.* ch. 9, p. 206, &c.

⁴ See *Barker v. Dacie*, 6 Ves. 688; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 510.

⁵ See *Pulteney v. Warren*, 6 Ves. 89, 90; *Grierson v. Eyre*, 9 Ves. 89; *Richards v. Noble*, 3 Meriv. 673. But see *Lansdowne v. Lansdowne*, 1 Mad. 116; *Eden on Injunct.* ch. 9, p. 206, &c.

⁶ 4 Eng. Law & Eq. 95.

⁷ See *Garth v. Cotton*, 3 Atk. 756; s. c. 1 Ves. 524, 546.

action. In a court of law, the party is not necessitated to bring an action of waste, but he may bring trover. These are the remedies; and, therefore, there is no ground of equity to come into this court. For satisfaction of damages is not the proper ground for the court to admit of these sorts of bills, but the staying of waste; because the court presumes, when a man has done waste, he may do the same again; and, therefore, will suffer the lessor or reversioner, when he brings his bill for an injunction to stay waste, to pray, at the same time, for an account of the waste done. And it is upon this ground, to prevent multiplicity of suits, that this court will decree an account of waste done, at the time with an injunction. Just like the case of a bill for a discovery of assets; an account may be prayed for at the same time. And though, originally, the bill was only brought for a discovery of assets, yet, to prevent a multiplicity of suits, the court will direct an account to be taken.”¹ Now, if this reasoning be well founded, either in itself, or upon the analogy of the case put of assets, it goes clearly to show, that, where discovery is sought, and is obtained, there, also, to prevent multiplicity of suits, an account ought to be decreed, without the additional ingredient of an injunction to stay future waste. And Lord Thurlow seems to have acted upon this ground.²

[* § 518 *a*. In a late case, on appeal before the Lords Justices, where a tenant for life, without impeachment for waste, pulled down the mansion-house, and built a better, in a more desirable situation, upon the premises, and those entitled in remainder brought a bill for an account, by reason of waste, it being proved that the bulk of the materials of the old house had been employed

¹ *Jesus College v. Bloom*, Ambler, 54; s. c. 3 Atk. 262; *Pulteney v. Warren*, 6 Ves. 89; *Bishop v. Church*, 2 Ves. 104; *Yates v. Hambley*, 2 Atk. 362; *Watson v. Hunter*, 5 Johns. Ch. 169; *Smith v. Cooke*, 3 Atk. 381. It may be said, that, on a bill for a discovery of assets, an account is necessary to ascertain the assets; and, when taken, the court ought to proceed to decree satisfaction, in order to prevent multiplicity of suits. But precisely the same thing may occur on a bill for an account of waste. Before the waste can be ascertained, it may be indispensable to have an account; and, when taken, the court ought to proceed to decree satisfaction. In *Jesus College v. Bloom* (Ambl. 54), the term was gone by an assignment to another tenant, and no injunction was asked as to future waste.

² *Lee v. Alston*, 1 Bro. Ch. 194, 195; s. c. 1 Ves. Jr. 78. See also *Eden* on Injunct. ch. 9, p. 206, &c.; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*).

in building the new one, and there being no evidence that any part of the materials had been sold, it was held that the bill was rightly dismissed by the Vice Chancellor. But the Lords Justices both expressed the opinion, that had the materials been sold, notwithstanding the very much larger expenditure upon the premises, the bill would well lie for an account.¹ How far such a tenant may rightfully cut timber on the estate during the continuance of his life-interest seems not very well settled in the English courts. But where it is of a growth to make it good husbandry to have it cut down and disposed of, it would seem proper that this should be done. And as this is not properly the annual profit of the estate, it is to be sold and the price invested by the trustees of the estate in remainder, and the annual interest paid to the tenant for life during the continuance of his estate, and then to him entitled in remainder, the principal sum being treated as a portion of the estate. But if the timber is wrongfully cut, the remedy of the one entitled in remainder is by an action of trover for the timber, or for money had and received.² In another case before the same learned judge, Vice-Chancellor Wood, this subject is very elaborately discussed and the authorities reviewed. That was a devise of a mansion-house with the appurtenances in fee, subject to an executory devise over for life, without waste, in case the first grantee died without leaving issue and remainder to a third party in fee. It was held, that the first grantee was entitled to commit legal waste, but not entitled to commit equitable waste, by which the courts understand that which will essentially depreciate the estate, and leave it in a condition different from the probable expectation of the testator. The doctrine of equitable waste applies equally to all cases of estates limited to go in a course of succession, whether that is effected by an intervening life-estate, or by an estate in fee with an executory devise over. It is doubted whether a tenant in fee-simple, subject to an executory devise over, can, in the absence of any indication of a contrary intention, be restrained from committing legal waste.³ But in a very late

¹ [* *Morris v. Morris*, 3 De G. & J. 323. See also *Morris v. Morris*, 15 Simons, 505; *Duke of Leeds v. Lord Amherst*, 2 Phill. 117; *Lansdowne v. Lansdowne*, 1 Mad. 116; *Wellesley v. Wellesley*, 6 Sim. 497; *Micklethwait v. Micklethwait*, 1 De G. & J. 504.

² *Gent v. Harrison*, Johnson, Eng. Ch. 517.

³ *Turner v. Wright*, Johnson, Eng. Ch. 740. Equitable waste is that which

case,¹ it is decided, that where one tenant for life of an estate filed a bill against the representative of a deceased tenant for life, to compel compensation for timber improperly cut on the estate, during the life of the deceased tenant, which occurred twenty years before, he was estopped by so long an acquiescence.

§ 518 *b*. A tenant for life impeachable for waste is not at liberty to cut down timber upon the estate without the order of the Court of Equity, and if he do so, the court will see that he derives no benefit from his unlawful act. But in such a case, the act being unlawful, the statute of limitations, as against the remainderman, begins to run from the time of the act. But if the debtor takes out letters of administration on his creditor's estate, it will have the effect to suspend the operation of the statute during the administration.² It was also declared here that the court would not be justified, in a case like the present, in ordering the timber on the estate to be cut upon the petition of the tenant, merely because it was ripe for cutting, unless it were also decaying, or injuring the growth of other timber. But in this country, cutting of timber growing on land is much less important than in England, and no order is expected to be made in advance. If good husbandry requires it, the tenant is excused.³]

§ 519. In regard to TITHES, also, and, incidentally, to MODUSES and other compositions, courts of equity in England exercise an extensive jurisdiction of an analogous nature.⁴ There is a very ancient jurisdiction in the Court of Exchequer in the matter of tithes. Lord Nottingham is said to have stated, that the jurisdic-

a prudent man would not do in the management of his own property. *Turner v. Wright*, 6 Jur. n. s. 809; s. c. id. 647. It is here said that a court of equity may interfere, where one unconscientiously exercises a legal right to the prejudice of another, or contrary to the dictates of prudence and reason. But the views maintained in this last case are questioned in the *London Jurist*, July 12, 1860, where it is maintained that, in principle, there is no distinction between legal and equitable waste, as to the right of a court of equity to interfere by injunction, and that the tenant for life should be restrained from committing either.

¹ *Harcourt v. White*, 6 Jur. n. s. 1087, before the Master of the Rolls, May, 1860.

² *Seagram v. Knight*, Law Rep. 2 Ch. App. 628. See same case before Lord Romilly, M. R., Law Rep. 3 Eq. 398.

³ *Drown v. Smith*, 52 Me. 141; *Bond v. Lockwood*, 33 Ill. 212.]

⁴ Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 C.; id. Dimes. M. 13; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 1.

tion in the Exchequer over tithes, by bill in equity, is not earlier than the reign of Henry VIII., and that it took its rise from the statute of augmentations, in his reign (33 Hen. VIII. ch. 39).¹ But other persons assert that it had a more early origin; and, in respect to extra-parochial tithes, which are a part of the ancient inheritance of the Crown, they insist that suits for tithes must always have fallen within the compass of the direct and substantial jurisdiction of the Court of Exchequer, as a court of revenue; and that the proper jurisdiction of tithes belongs there.² Be this as it may, the jurisdiction of the Court of Chancery over the same subject seems to have been of a much later origin, or, at least, to have been matter of doubt and controversy to a much later period; the jurisdiction not having been firmly established until after the restoration of Charles II.³ The Court of Chancery has ever since been held to have a concurrent jurisdiction with the Court of Exchequer.⁴ This concurrent jurisdiction in both courts is now generally considered to be merely incidental and collateral, arising from the general equitable jurisdiction of these courts in matters of account, and in compelling a discovery.⁵ And, therefore, wherever the right to tithes is clearly established, an account is consequential; for it would be otherwise impossible to give full effect to that right, unless upon a discovery and account.⁶ If the right is disputed, it must be first ascertained at law, before an account will be decreed.⁷ Indeed, it may be truly said, that in all matters of tithes, a court of equity is far more competent than a court of law to administer an appropriate remedy.⁸

§ 520. Courts of equity in England will not only enforce an account in cases of tithes; but they will also exercise jurisdiction to establish a modus, or composition, in cases where the party in-

¹ Harg. note to Co. Litt. 159 a, note 290; Anon., 1 Freem. 303.

² Ibid.; *Hardcastle v. Smithson*, 3 Atk. 247.

³ Ibid.; Anon., 1 Freem. 203; Anon., 2 Ch. Cas. 337; s. c. 2 Freem. 27; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 84.

⁴ Bacon, *Abridg. Tythes*, B. 6; Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 C.; id. *Dimes*. M. 13.

⁵ 3 Black. Com. 437; Co. Litt. 159 a, Hargrave's note, 290; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 510, 511.

⁶ *Foxcraft v. Parris*, 5 Ves. 221; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 84 to 88; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 210, 511.

⁷ Ibid.; *Hughes v. Davies*, 5 Sim. 349.

⁸ *Mitford*, Eq. Pl. 125, by Jeremy; *Pulteney v. Warren*, 6 Ves. 89.

sisting on the *modus* has been disturbed by proceedings at law, or in equity, or in the ecclesiastical courts as to tithes; but not otherwise. The peculiarities belonging to the law of tithes, and the doctrines respecting *moduses*, are the less important to be dwelt on in this place, because they do not in any important manner illustrate any of the general doctrines of equity; but they turn upon considerations eminently of an ecclesiastical nature, and are more suitable for a general treatise on tithes.¹

§ 521. Having passed under review some of the principal heads of Equity Jurisdiction in matters of account, which do not require any elaborate examination, or belong to subjects which peculiarly illustrate the nature of it, we may conclude this examination with some few matters which appropriately belong to the head of Account, and are incident to the exercise of this remedial jurisdiction in all its forms.

§ 522. In the first place, in all bills in equity for an account, both parties are deemed actors when the cause is before the court upon its merits. It is upon this ground that the party defendant, contrary to the ordinary course of equity proceedings, is entitled to orders in a cause to which a plaintiff alone is generally entitled. As, for instance, in such a case, a defendant may have an order for a *ne exeat regno*, even against a co-defendant.² So, it is a general rule, that no person but a plaintiff can entitle himself to a decree. But in bills for an account, if a balance is ultimately found in favor of the defendant, he is entitled to a decree for such balance against the plaintiff. And for a like reason, although a defendant cannot ordinarily revive a suit, which has not proceeded to a decree; yet, in a bill for an account, if the plaintiff dies after an interlocutory decree to account, the defendant is entitled to revive the suit against the personal representatives of the plaintiff.³ And if the defendant dies, his personal representatives may revive the suit against the plaintiff.⁴ The good sense of the doctrine

¹ *Earl of Coventry v. Burslen*, 2 Anst. 567, note; *Gordon v. Simpkinson*, 11 Ves. 509; *Stawell v. Atkyns*, 2 Anst. 564; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 202; *Mayor of York v. Pilkington*, 1 Atk. 282, 283; *Warden, &c., of St. Paul's v. Morris*, 9 Ves. 155. See also *Whaley v. Dawson*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 370, 371; *Daws v. Benn*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 513.

² *Done's case*, 1 P. Will. 263.

³ 1 Eq. Abridg. 3 Pl. 5; *Anon.*, 3 Atk. 691, 692; *Ludlow v. Simond*, 2 Cain. Err. 39; *Lord Stowell v. Cole*, 2 Vern. 219, and *Mr. Raithby's note*; *Horwood v. Schmedes*, 12 Ves. 316.

⁴ *Kent v. Kent*, Prec. Ch. 197.

seems to be that, wherever a defendant may derive a benefit from further proceedings, whether before or after a decree, he may be said to have an interest in it, and consequently ought to have a right to revive it.¹

§ 523. In the next place, there are some matters of defence, either peculiarly belonging to cases of account, or strikingly illustrative of some of the principles already alluded to, under the head of accident, mistake, or fraud. Thus, it is ordinarily a good bar to a suit for an account, that the parties have already in writing stated and adjusted the items of the account, and struck the balance.² In such a case a court of equity will not interfere; for under such circumstances, an *indebitatus assumpsit* upon an *insimul computassent* lies at law, and there is no ground for resorting to equity. If, therefore, there has been an account stated, that may be set up by way of plea, as a bar to all discovery and relief, unless some matter is shown, which calls for the interposition of a court of equity.³ But, if there has been any mistake or omission or accident, or fraud, or undue advantage, by which the account stated is in truth vitiated, and the balance is incorrectly fixed, a court of equity will not suffer it to be conclusive upon the parties; but will allow it to be opened and re-examined.⁴ In some cases, as of gross fraud, or gross mistake, or undue advantage or imposition, made palpable to the court, it will direct the whole account to be opened, and taken *de novo*.⁵ In other cases, where the mis-

¹ *Williams v. Cooke*, 10 Ves. 406; *Horwood v. Schmedes*, 12 Ves. 311, 316.

² *Dawson v. Dawson*, 1 Atk. 1; *Taylor v. Haylin*, 2 Bro. Ch. 310; *Johnson v. Curtis*, cited 2 Bro. Ch. 310, Mr. Belt's note; s. c. 3 Bro. Ch. 266, and Mr. Belt's note; *Burk v. Brown*, 2 Atk. 397, 399; *Sumner v. Thorpe*, 2 Atk. 1; *Story on Equity Plead.* § 798 to 802.

³ *Ibid.*; *Dawson v. Dawson*, 1 Atk. 1; *Anon.*, 2 Freeman, 62; *Chambers v. Goldwin*, 9 Ves. 265, 266; *Taylor v. Haylin*, 1 Cox, 435; s. c. 3 Bro. Ch. 310; *Chappedelaine v. Decheneaux*, 4 Cranch, 306; *Perkins v. Hart*, 11 Wheat. 237; *Story on Equity Plead.* § 798 to 802.

⁴ A settled account between client and attorney, or between other persons standing in confidential relations to each other, will be more readily opened than any others; and even, it is said, upon general allegations of error, without any specific errors being pointed out; where the answer admits errors. *Matthews v. Walwyn*, 4 Ves. 125; *Newman v. Payne*, 2 Ves. Jr. 199. See also *Beaumont v. Boulton*, 5 Ves. 485; *Story on Eq. Plead.* § 800; *Todd v. Wilson*, 9 Beavan, 486.

⁵ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*); *Vernon v. Vawdry*, 2 Atk. 119; *Barrow v. Rhineland*, 1 Johns. Ch. 550; *Piddock v. Brown*, 3 P. Will. 288;

take, or omission, or inaccuracy, or fraud, or imposition, is not shown to affect or stain all the items of the transaction, the court will content itself with a more moderate exercise of its authority.¹ It will allow the account to stand, with liberty to the plaintiff to surcharge and falsify it; the effect of which is, to leave the account in full force and vigor, as a stated account, except so far as it can be impugned by the opposing party, who has the burden of proof on him to establish errors and mistakes.² Sometimes a still more moderate course is adopted; and the account is simply opened to contestation, as to one or more items, which are specially set forth in the bill of the plaintiff, as being erroneous or unjustifiable; and, in all other respects, it is treated as conclusive.³

§ 524. When, upon a bill to open a stated account, liberty is given to surcharge and falsify, the cause is referred to a master. The examination of the account then takes place before him, and upon his report the court finally acts; for in matters of account it never acts directly, but only through the instrumentality of a master, by whom the whole matter is thoroughly sifted. The liberty to surcharge and falsify includes not only an examination of errors of fact, but of errors of law.⁴

§ 525. These terms, "surcharge" and "falsify," have a distinct sense in the vocabulary of courts of equity, a little removed from that which they bear in the ordinary language of common life. In the language of common life, we understand "surcharge" to import an overcharge in quantity, or price, or value, beyond what is just, correct, and reasonable. In this sense, it is nearly equivalent to "falsify"; for every item which is not truly charged as it should be, is false; and, by establishing such overcharge, it is falsified. But in the sense of courts of equity, these words are used in contradistinction to each other. A surcharge is appropriately applied to the balance of the whole account; and supposes credits to be omitted, which ought to be allowed. A falsifi-

Wharton v. May, 5 Ves. 27, 48, 49; *Story on Equity Plead.* § 800 to 802; *Clarke v. Tipping*, 9 Beavan, 284.

¹ *Ibid.*; *Johnson v. Curtis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 310, Mr. Belt's note; s. c. 3 Bro. Ch. 266, Mr. Belt's note.

² *Pitt v. Cholmondeley*, 2 Ves. 565, 566; *Perkins v. Hart*, 11 Wheat. 237; *Story on Equity Plead.* § 801, 802.

³ *Brownell v. Brownell*, 2 Bro. Ch. 62, 63; *Consequa v. Fanning*, 3 Johns. Ch. 587; s. c. 17 Johns. 511; *Twogood v. Swanston*, 6 Ves. 484, 486.

⁴ *Roberts v. Kuffin*, 2 Atk. 112.

cation applies to some item in the debits ; and supposes that the item is wholly false, or in some part erroneous. This distinction is taken notice of by Lord Hardwicke ; and the words used by him are so clear that they supersede all necessity for further commentary. " Upon a liberty to the plaintiff to surcharge and falsify," says he, " the *onus probandi* is always on the party having that liberty ; for the court takes it as a stated account, and establishes it. But, if any of the parties can show an omission, for which credit ought to be, that is a *surcharge* ; or if any thing is inserted that is a wrong charge, he is at liberty to show it, and that is a *falsification*. But that must be by proof on his side. And that makes a great difference between the general cases of an open account, and where [leave] only to surcharge and falsify ; for such must be made out."¹

§ 526. What shall constitute, in the sense of a court of equity, a stated account, is in some measure dependent upon the particular circumstances of the case. An account in writing, examined and signed by the parties, will be deemed a stated account, notwithstanding it contains the ordinary preliminary clause, that errors are excepted.² But in order to make an account a stated account, it is not necessary that it should be signed by the parties.³ It is sufficient if it has been examined and accepted by both parties. And this acceptance need not be express ; but may be implied from circumstances.⁴ Between merchants at home, an account which has been presented, and no objection made thereto after the lapse of several posts, is treated under ordinary circumstances, as being, by acquiescence, a stated account.⁵ Between merchants in different countries, a rule founded in similar considerations prevails. If an account has been transmitted from the one to the other, and no objection is made after several opportunities of writing have occurred, it is treated as an acquiescence in the correctness of the account transmitted ; and, therefore, it is

¹ Pitt v. Cholmondeley, 2 Ves. 565, 566. See also Perkins v. Hart, 11 Wheat. 237, 256. [* In opening a settled account, it is not uncommon to allow the correction of errors, on both sides. Floyd v. Priester, 8 Rich. Eq. 248.]

² See Johnson v. Curtis, cited 2 Brown, Ch. 310 ; 3 Brown, Ch. 266, and Mr. Belt's notes.

³ Willis v. Jernegan, 2 Atk. 251, 252.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Sherman v. Sherman, 2 Vern. 276 ; s. c. 1 Eq. Abridg. 12 Pl. 10, 11 ; Irving v. Young, 1 Sim. & Stu. 333.

deemed a stated account.¹ In truth, in each case, the rule admits, or rather requires, the same general exposition. It is, that an account rendered shall be deemed an account stated, from the presumed approbation or acquiescence of the parties, unless an objection is made thereto within a reasonable time.² That reasonable time is to be judged of, in ordinary cases, by the habits of business at home and abroad; and the usual course is required to be followed, unless there are special circumstances to vary it, or to excuse a departure from it.

§ 527. Upon like grounds, *à fortiori*, a settled account will be deemed conclusive between the parties, unless some fraud, mistake, omission, or inaccuracy is shown. For it would be most mischievous to allow settled accounts between the parties, especially where vouchers have been delivered up or destroyed, to be unravelled, unless for urgent reasons, and under circumstances of plain error, which ought to be corrected.³ And, in cases of settled accounts, the court will not generally open the account; but will at most, only grant liberty to surcharge and falsify, unless in cases of apparent fraud.⁴

[* § 527 *a*. But where the parties are not upon equal terms, in stating or settling an account, a court of equity will often wholly disregard it. As where the subject-matter of the account grew out of the relation of attorney and client. Hence a promise by a client to pay money to counsel for his advocacy or for other services connected with the litigation, whether made before, during, or after the litigation, is in the English courts, regarded as absolutely void, as against good policy, and will not, therefore, support an account stated.⁵]

§ 528. In regard to acquiescence in stated accounts, although it amounts to an admission, or presumption of their correctness, it by no means establishes the fact of their having been settled, even

¹ *Willis v. Jernegan*, 2 Atk. 252; *Tickel v. Short*, 2 Ves. 239; *Murray v. Toland*, 3 Johns. Ch. 569, 575; *Freeland v. Heron*, 7 Cranch, 147.

² *Ibid.*; Com. Dig. Chancery, 2 A. 3.

³ *Brownell v. Brownell*, 2 Bro. Ch. 62; *Taylor v. Haylin*, 2 Bro. Ch. 310; *Johnson v. Curtis*, cited 2 Bro. Ch. 310; s. c. 3 Brown, Ch. 266, Mr. Belt's notes; *Chambers v. Goldwin*, 5 Ves. 837, 838; *Pitt v. Cholmondeley*, 2 Ves. 566.

⁴ *Vernon v. Vawdry*, 2 Atk. 119; *Chambers v. Goldwin*, 9 Ves. 265, 266; *Drew v. Power*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 192.

⁵ [* *Kennedy v. Broun*, 13 C. B. N. s. 677.]

though the acquiescence has been for a considerable time. There must be other ingredients in the case to justify the conclusion of a settlement.¹

§ 529. It is, too, a most material ground, in all bills for an account, to ascertain whether they are brought to open and correct errors in the account *recenti facto*; or whether the application is made after a great lapse of time. In cases of this sort, where the demand is strictly of a legal nature, or might be cognizable at law, courts of equity govern themselves by the same limitations as to entertaining such suits as are prescribed by the statute of limitations in regard to suits in courts of common law in matters of account. If, therefore, the ordinary limitation of such suits at law be six years, courts of equity will follow the same period of limitation.² In so doing, they do not act, in cases of this sort (that is, in matters of concurrent jurisdiction) so much upon the ground of analogy to the statute of limitations, as positively in obedience to such statute.³ But, where the demand is not of a legal nature, but is purely equitable; or where the bar of the statute is inapplicable; courts of equity have another rule, founded sometimes upon the analogies of the law, where such analogy exists, and sometimes upon its own inherent doctrine, not to entertain stale or antiquated demands, and not to encourage laches, and negligence.⁴ Hence in matters of account, although not barred by the statute of limitations, courts of equity refuse to interfere after a

¹ Lord Clancarty *v.* Latouche, 1 B. & Beatt. 428; Irving *v.* Young, 1 Sim. & Stu. 333.

² Hovenden *v.* Lord Annesley, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 629; Smith *v.* Clay, 3 Brown, Ch. 639, n.

³ Hovenden *v.* Lord Annesley, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 629, 630, 631; Spring *v.* Gray, 5 Mason, 527, 528; Sherwood *v.* Sutton, 5 Mason, 143, 146; *ante*, § 55 a.

⁴ Sherman *v.* Sherman, 2 Vern. 276; s. c. 1 Eq. Abridg. 12; Bridges *v.* Mitchell, Bunb. 217; s. c. Gilb. Eq. 217; Foster *v.* Hodgson, 19 Ves. 180, 184; Sturt *v.* Mellish, 2 Atk. 610; Pomfret *v.* Lord Windsor, 2 Ves. 472, 476, 477; Bond *v.* Hopkins, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 428; Smith *v.* Clay, Amb. 647; 3 Bro. Ch. 639, note; Stackhouse *v.* Barnston, 10 Ves. 466, 467; Mooers *v.* White, 6 Johns. Ch. 360; Rayner *v.* Pearsall, 3 Johns. Ch. 578; Lewis *v.* Baird, 3 McLean, 83; Creath *v.* Sims, 5 How. S. R. 192; Ray *v.* Bogart, 2 Johns. Cas. 432; Ellison *v.* Moffat, 1 Johns. Ch. 46; Sherwood *v.* Sutton, 4 Mason, 143, 146; Robinson *v.* Hook, 4 Mason, 139, 150, 152; Piatt *v.* Vattier, 9 Peters, 405; Willison *v.* Watkins, 3 Peters, 44; Miller *v.* McIntire, 6 Peters, 61, 66; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 27, and notes; Brownell *v.* Brownell, 2 Bro. Ch. 62.

considerable lapse of time, from considerations of public policy, from the difficulty of doing entire justice, when the original transactions have become obscure by time, and the evidence may be lost, and from the consciousness that the repose of titles and the security of property are mainly promoted by a full enforcement of the maxim, *Vigilantibus, non dormientibus, jura subveniunt*.¹ Under peculiar circumstances, however, excusing or justifying the delay, courts of equity will not refuse their aid in furtherance of the rights of the party; since in such cases there is no pretence to insist upon laches or negligence, as a ground for dismissal of the suit.²

CHAPTER IX.

ADMINISTRATION.

- [* § 530, 531. Administration of the estates of deceased persons.
- § 532, 543 a, 578. The grounds of equity jurisdiction in such matters.
- § 544, 545. The executor or administrator may bring creditors into equity.
- § 546. One creditor may maintain a bill in equity.
- § 547, 548. It may be on behalf of himself, and all others.
- § 548 a. If assets are admitted, a decree passes for plaintiff.
- § 549. After judgment to account, creditors will be enjoined.
- § 550. Special reasons for the interference of courts of equity.
- § 551. Legal assets, such as may be reached at law.
- § 552. Equitable assets, such as are reached only in equity.
- § 552 a, 552 b. Such as can only be reached by direction of the testator.
- § 553. Equity follows the rules of law in distributing legal assets.
- § 554. But in regard to equitable assets the rule of equality.
- § 555. Debts have priority of legacies charged on the same estate.
- § 556, 573. This is presumed to be the intention of the testator.
- § 557. Equity will so apply equitable assets as to countervail legal preferences.

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 27, and notes; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 549, 550; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 79, 80; *Holtscob v. Rivers*, 1 Ch. Cas. 127; *Jasan v. Toulmin*, 9 Ala. 662. Mr. Fonblanque's collection of principles and authorities to illustrate this doctrine is very comprehensive, and characterized by his usual acuteness and strong sense. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 27, and notes. Mr. Jeremy, also upon this subject, has given us a very ample and discriminating collection of authorities. Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 549, 550.

² *Lopdell v. Creagh*, 1 Bligh (N. S.), 255.

- § 558. Marrelling assets to prevent injustice.
 § 559. So also in all cases of double security.
 § 560. Seldom applied to estates of living persons.
 § 561, 562. The rule of courts of equity is to pay all, but circumstances often hinder its application.
 § 563. One, whose security is exhausted by another, put in his place.
 § 564, 564 a. Simple contract creditors put in place of mortgagee.
 § 565. Legatees may stand in place of mortgagee, but not of speciality creditors.
 § 566. Legatees may claim substitution in place of those who have exhausted their means of payment.
 § 566 a. Specific legatees may claim redemption of the legacy.
 § 566 b, 566 c. Legacy when a charge on land.
 § 567. This rule of substitution derived from the civil law.
 § 568. Equity will protect the widow's paraphernalia.
 § 569. Equity does not interfere in behalf of legacies for charity.
 § 570. But heirs and devisees may claim such interference.
 § 571. Priorities stated among different claimants.
 § 572. What creates an exemption of personal estate.
 § 574-576. But where the personal estate stands in the place of security it may claim the equity of its position.
 § 579. How far creditors have a lien on personal assets.
 § 579 a. Right of the executor to retain in payment of his own debt.
 § 580, 581. How far the purchaser of personal assets is liable as trustee.
 § 582. Where husband, during coverture, converts the assets of wife as executrix.
 § 583-589. How far courts of equity will interfere, where there are administrations in different countries.
 § 589 a, 589 b. Subject further illustrated.]

§ 530. HAVING thus gone over some of the more important cases, in which matters of account are involved, as the principal, and sometimes, as the exclusive ground of jurisdiction, we shall now take leave of this part of the subject, and proceed to the consideration of other branches of concurrent jurisdiction in equity; in which, although accounts are sometimes involved, yet the jurisdiction is derived from, or essentially connected with, other sources of jurisdiction; and accounts, whenever taken, are mere incidents to other relief.

§ 531. And, in the first place, the jurisdiction of courts of equity in the administration of the assets of deceased persons. The word *assets* is derived from the French word *assez*, which means sufficient, or enough; that is, sufficient, or enough, in the hands of the executor or administrator, to make him chargeable to the creditors, legatees, and distributees of the deceased, so far as the personal property of the deceased extends, which comes to the hands of the executor or administrator, for administration. In an accurate and legal sense, all the personal property of the deceased,

which is of a salable nature, and may be converted into ready money, is deemed assets.¹ But the word is not confined to such property; for all other property of the deceased, which is chargeable with his debts or legacies, and is applicable to that purpose, is, in a large sense, assets.²

§ 532. It has been said, that the whole jurisdiction of courts of equity, in the administration of assets, is founded on the principle, that it is the duty of the court to enforce the execution of trusts; and that the executor or administrator, who has the property in his hands, is bound to apply that property to the payment of debts and legacies; and to apply the surplus according to the will of the testator, or, in case of intestacy, according to the statute of distributions. So that the sole ground, on which courts of equity proceed in cases of this kind, is to be deemed the execution of a trust.³

§ 533. This is certainly a very satisfactory foundation on which to rest the jurisdiction in many cases; for, under many circumstances, as an execution of a trust, the subject would be properly cognizable in equity, and especially if the party would not be chargeable at law, since it is the ordinary reason for a court of equity to grant relief, that the party is remediless at law. It has also been truly said, that the only thing inquired of in a court of equity is, whether the property, bound by a trust, has come into the hands of persons who are either bound to execute the trust, or to preserve the property for the persons entitled to it. If we advert to the cases on the subject, we shall find that trusts are enforced, not only against those persons who are rightfully possessed of trust property, as trustees, but also against all persons who come into possession of the property bound by the trust, with notice of the trust. And, whosoever so comes into possession, is considered as bound, with respect to that special property, to the execution of the trust.⁴

¹ 2 Black. Comm. 510; Toller on Executors, B. 2, ch. 1, p. 137.

² 2 Black. Comm. 244, 340; Toller on Executors, B. 3, ch. 8, p. 409.

³ *Adair v. Shaw*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 262. See also *Farrington v. Knightly*, 1 P. Will. 548, 549; *Rachfield v. Careless*, 2 P. Will. 161; *Duke of Rutland v. Duchess of Rutland*, 2 P. Will. 210, 211; *Elliott v. Collier*, 1 Ves. 16; *Anon.*, 1 Atk. 491; *Wind v. Jekyll*, 2 P. Will. 575; *Nicholson v. Sherman*, 1 Ch. Cas. 57; *Bac. Abridg. Legacy*, M.; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 466, 467.

⁴ *Ibid.* [* See also *Thorndike v. Hunt*, 3 De G. & J. 563; *Hopper v. Conyers*, 12 Jur. n. s. 328; *Sheriff v. Butler*, *id.* 329.]

§ 534. Certainly, to no persons can these considerations more appropriately apply than to executors and administrators, and those claiming under them, with notice of the administration and assets. But, if it were the sole ground of sustaining the jurisdiction, that it is the case of a trust cognizable in equity alone, it would follow, that, instead of being a matter of concurrent jurisdiction, it would be a matter belonging to the exclusive jurisdiction of equity. For, although equity does not purport to entertain jurisdiction of all trusts; some of them, such as cases of bailments, being ordinarily cognizable at law;¹ yet, of such trusts, as are peculiar to courts of equity, the jurisdiction is exclusive in such courts. Now, we all know, that both the courts of common law and the ecclesiastical courts have cognizance of administrations; and many suits, respecting the administration of assets, are daily entertained therein. Courts of equity, therefore, in assuming general jurisdiction over cases of administration, do, indeed, in some measure, found themselves upon the notion of a constructive trust in the executors or administrators.² But the fact of there being a constructive trust is not the sole ground of jurisdiction. Other auxiliary grounds also exist; such as the necessity of taking accounts, and compelling a discovery;³ and the consideration, that the remedy at law, when it exists, is not plain, adequate, and complete. The jurisdiction, therefore, now assumed by courts of equity to so wide an extent, over all administrations and the settlement of estates, in cases of testacy and intestacy, is not (as it should seem) exclusively referable to the mere existence of a constructive trust which is often sufficiently remediable at law); but it is referable to the mixed considerations already adverted to, each of which has a large operation in equity.⁴

§ 535. A little attention to the nature of the jurisdiction exercised in the courts of common law and the ecclesiastical courts in cases of administrations will abundantly show the necessity of the interposition of courts of equity. In the first place, in suits at common law, nothing more can be done than to establish the debt of the creditor; and, if there is any controversy as to the existence of the assets, and a discovery is wanted; or, if the assets are

¹ Black. Comm. 431, 432; 1 Wooddeson, Lect. vii. p. 208, 209.

² Bac. Abridg. *Legacy*, M.

³ Com. Dig. *Chancery*, 2 A. 1; 3 Black. Com. 98.

⁴ See Mitford, *Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, p. 125, 126, 136.

not of a legal nature ; or, if a marshalling of the assets is indispensable to a due payment of the creditor's claim ; it is obvious, that the remedy at law cannot be effectual. But there may be other interests injuriously affected by the judgment of a court of common law, in a suit by a creditor, which injury that court could not redress or prevent ; but which courts of equity could completely redress or prevent.

§ 536. In the next place as to the ecclesiastical courts. They have, it is true, an ancient jurisdiction over the probate of wills, and the granting of administrations ; and, as incident thereto, an authority to enforce the payment of legacies of personal property.¹ But, by the common law, although an executor was compellable to account before the Ordinary or Ecclesiastical Judge, and so was an administrator ; yet the Ordinary was to take the account as given in by the executor or administrator, and could not oblige him to prove the items of it, or to swear to the truth of it.²

§ 537. The statute of 31st of Edward III. ch. 11, put executors and administrators upon the same footing, as to accounting for assets ; but it in no manner whatsoever, changed the mode of accounting by either of them.³ A legatee might falsify the account of an executor or administrator in the spiritual court, as may, also, the next of kin, since the statute of distributions of 22d and 23d of Car. II. ch. 10. But a creditor of the estate could not falsify the account in the ecclesiastical court, for his proper remedy was held to be at the common law.⁴ By the statute of 21st of Henry VIII. ch. 5, § 4, executors and administrators were bound to deliver an inventory of the effects of the deceased, upon oath to the Ordinary. But the inventory could not be controverted in the ecclesiastical courts by a creditor ; but only by a legatee.⁵ Even an

¹ 2 Black. Comm. 494 ; 3 Black. Comm. 98 ; Bac. Abridg. *Legacies*, M. ; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, ch. 1, § 1, and notes ; *Marriott v. Marriott*, 1 Str. 666.

² 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, ch. 3, § 2, and note (*d*) ; *Archbishop of Canterbury v. Wills*, 1 Salk. 315.

³ *Ibid.* ; 2 Black. Comm. 496 ; 4 Burns, *Eccles. Law, Wills, Distribution, Account*, viii. p. 368 ; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 2, note (*d*).

⁴ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 2, note (*d*) ; *Hinton v. Parker*, 8 Mod. 168 ; *Catchside v. Ovington*, 3 Burr. 1922 ; *Archbishop of Canterbury v. Wills*, 1 Salk. 315.

⁵ *Hinton v. Parker*, 8 Mod. 168 ; *Catchside v. Ovington*, 3 Burr. 1922 ; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 2. Mr. Fonblanque is in an error, when he says, " The inventory could not be controverted in the spiritual court." The author-

administration bond will not be broken by an omission to pay a creditor's debt; but it is a security merely for those who are interested in the estate.¹ Indeed, before the statute of distributions, it was a matter greatly debated, whether an administrator could be compelled to make any distribution of an intestate's estate; and, for a great length of time, it was held, that an executor was in all cases entitled to the personal estate of his testator, not disposed of by his will.²

§ 538. The jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts being so manifestly defective in the case of creditors, resort was almost necessarily had to courts of equity, to compel a discovery of assets and an account. And where a creditor did not seek a general settlement of the estate by a suit in behalf of himself and all other creditors, still, he was entitled to a discovery in courts of equity, to enable him to recover his own debt in an action at law.³

§ 539. In regard to legatees, also, the remedy was in many cases quite as defective. No remedy lies at the common law, in cases of pecuniary legacies;⁴ and although (as has been stated) a remedy does lie in the spiritual courts; yet, in a great variety of cases, that remedy is insufficient and imperfect. Thus, if payment of a legacy should be pleaded to a suit in the ecclesiastical courts, and there is but one witness of the fact (which the ecclesiastical courts will not admit as sufficient proof, for their law requires two), there the temporal courts will grant a prohibition to further proceedings.⁵ So, if a husband should sue for a legacy in the ecclesiastical courts, the Court of Chancery will prohibit him; because the ecclesiastical courts cannot compel him to make any settlement on his wife in consideration of the legacy.⁶ So, if a legacy is due to an infant, the Court of Chancery will interfere, at the instance of the executor, and prevent

ities cited by him show, that it could be by a legatee, but not by a creditor. 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 2.

¹ *Archbishop of Canterbury v. Wills*, 1 Salk. 315; *Greenside v. Benson*, 3 Atk. 248, 252; *Ashley v. Baillie*, 2 Ves. 368; *Wallis v. Pipon*, Ambler, 183; *Archbishop of Canterbury v. House*, Cowp. 140; *Thomas v. Archbishop of Canterbury*, 1 Cox, 399.

² 2 Black. Comm. 514, 515; Toller on Executors, B. 3, ch. 6, p. 369.

³ Com. Dig. Chancery, 2 C. 3; *id.* 3, B. 1, 2.

⁴ *Decks v. Strutt*, 5 Term. 690; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 2.

⁵ Bacon, Abridg. *Legacy*, M.; 3 Black. Comm. 112.

⁶ *Ibid.*; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 2, and note (d).

the spiritual courts from proceeding, because the executor may be entitled to a bond to indemnify him, and to refund in case of a deficiency of assets.¹ Many other cases might be put of a like nature.

§ 540. But a stronger instance may be stated. If the testator does not dispose of the residue of his estate ; and yet, from the circumstances of the will, the executor is plainly not entitled to the residue there, he will be held liable to distribute it, as a trustee for the next of kin. But the spiritual courts have no jurisdiction whatsoever in such a case, to enforce a distribution ; for trusts are not cognizable in those courts, and cannot be enforced by them.² Even in the common case of a legacy of personal estate, the legacy does not vest in the legatee, until the executor assents to it ; and until he assents, it would seem not to be suable in the spiritual courts. But courts of equity consider the executor to be a trustee of the legatee, and will compel him to assent to and pay the legacy as a matter of trust.³ And, if there are no legal assets to pay a legacy, although there are ample equitable assets, the spiritual courts cannot enforce payment of the legacy ; for they have no jurisdiction over equitable assets.⁴

§ 541. In cases of distribution of the residue of estates, the remedy in the spiritual courts is also, on other accounts, exceedingly defective : for those courts do not possess any adequate means for a perfect ascertainment of all the debts ; or to compel a payment of them, when ascertained, so as to fix the precise residuum ; or to protect the executor or administrator in his administration, according to their decree.⁵ Besides, the interposition of a court of equity may be required for many other purposes, before a final settlement and distribution of the estate ; as for instance, to compel an executor to bring the funds into court, or to give security for the payment of debts, legacies, and distributive shares, where there is danger of insolvency, or he is wast-

¹ *Horrell v. Waldron*, 1 Vern. 26 ; *Noel v. Robinson*, 1 Vern. 91. But see *Anon.*, 1 Atk. 491 ; *Hawkins v. Day, Ambler*, 162 ; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 2.

² *Farrington v. Knightley*, 1 P. Will. 545, 548.

³ *Wind v. Jekyll*, 1 P. Will. 575.

⁴ *Barker v. May*, 9 B. & Cressw. 489. See also *Paschall v. Ketterich, Dyer*, 151 b ; *Edwards v. Graves*, Hob. 265 ; *Bac. Abridg. Legacy*, M.

⁵ See 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 3, § 2 note (d) ; *id.* B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 2, and note (d).

ing the assets, or where the debts, legacies, and distributive shares are not presently payable, or payment cannot be presently enforced.¹

§ 542. The jurisdiction of courts of equity to superintend the administration of assets, and decree a distribution of the residue, after payment of all debts and charges among the parties entitled, either as legatees or as distributees, does not seem to have been thoroughly established until near the close of the reign of Charles II. The objection was then made that the spiritual courts had full authority, under the statute of distributions, to decree a distribution of the residue. But upon a demurrer filed to a bill for a distribution, it was held, by the Lord Chancellor, that, there being no negative words in the Act of Parliament (the statute of distributions), the jurisdiction of the Court of Chancery was not taken away; for the remedy in chancery was more complete and effectual than that in the spiritual courts; or, to use the language of the court upon that occasion, the spiritual court in that case had but a lame jurisdiction.² And, although ordinarily, in cases of concurrent jurisdiction, the decree of the court first having possession of the cause is held conclusive; yet courts of chancery have not held themselves bound by decrees of the spiritual courts in cases of distribution, from their supposed inability to do entire justice.³

§ 543. For a great length of time, the usual resort has been to the Court of Chancery, to settle the administration of estates; so that, practically speaking, in cases of any complication or difficulty, it has acquired almost an exclusive jurisdiction. In many cases, indeed, besides those which have been already mentioned, it is impossible for any other court than a court of equity to administer full and satisfactory justice among all the parties in interest; and, especially, where equitable assets are to be administered, or the

¹ See 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 2, note (*d*); *Duncumban v. Stint*, 1 Ch. Cas. 121; *Strange v. Harris*, 3 Bro. Ch. 365; *Blake v. Blake*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 26.

² *Matthews v. Newby*, 1 Vern. 133; *Howard v. Howard*, 1 Vern. 134; *Buckle v. Atleo*, 2 Vern. 37; *Gibbons v. Dawley*, 2 Ch. Cas. 198; *Pamplin v. Green*, 2 Ch. Cas. 95; *Lord Winchelsea v. Duke of Norfolk*, 2 Ch. 367; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, ch. 1, § 2; *Digby v. Cornwallis*, 3 Ch. 72; *Petit v. Smith*, 1 P. Will 7; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 467.

³ See *Bissell v. Axtell*, 2 Vern. 47, and Mr. Raithby's note; 1 Eq. Abridg. E. p. 136, Pl. 2, 3, 4.

assets are to be marshalled; as we shall abundantly see in the further progress of these Commentaries.

[* § 543 *a*. Much which is said, in the preceding sections, in regard to the extent and the foundation of equity jurisdiction in England, in matters affecting the settlement of estates, has no application to many of the American States. The courts of probate, in this country (and it is more so now in England than formerly) have ample powers, both in the extent of their jurisdiction and their mode of procedure, for the accomplishment of the principal objects, upon the attainment of which the English equity jurisdiction, in such matters, is founded. Hence, in this country, courts of equity, do not, ordinarily, interfere in the administration of estates, and then only in aid of the courts of probate, and for the accomplishment of some specific end, not readily attainable in the courts of probate, after which the cause is remanded to the probate court, with the decree of the Court of Equity, and becomes a part of the proceedings there, that the final settlement of the estate may remain in that court. But in England, when a matter of administration of an estate once comes into the courts of equity, it draws the whole administration into that court, and the final settlement is made there.¹ And although a legatee, or next of kin, cannot, even in equity, go directly against the debtors of the estate, there being no legal privity; yet, if there is collusion between such debtors and the administrator, they may both be called into a court of equity, for an account.² And an executor, who has become domiciled in another State, may be called to an account, in the courts of equity there, by an unpaid legatee.³]

§ 544. The application for aid and relief in the administration of estates is sometimes made by the executor or administrator himself, when he finds the affairs of his testator or intestate so much involved, that he cannot safely administer the estate, except under the direction of a court of equity. In such a case, it is competent for him to institute a suit against the creditors generally, for the

¹ [* *Heirs of Adams v. Adams*, 22 Ver. 50; *post*, § 546; *Stewart v. Stewart*, 31 Alabama, 207. In some of the American States it seems to be supposed that courts of equity have a concurrent jurisdiction with the courts of probate, in many matters connected with the settlement of estates. *Seymour v. Seymour*, 4 Johns. Ch. 409; *Van Mater v. Sickler*, 1 Stockton, 483; *Clarke v. Johnston*, 2 id. 287.

² *Fleming v. McKesson*, 3 Jones, Eq. 316.

³ *Colbert v. Daniel*, 32 Alabama, 329.]

purpose of having all their claims adjusted, and a final decree, settling the order and payment of the assets.¹ These are sometimes called bills of conformity (probably because the executor or administrator in such case undertakes to conform to the decree, or the creditors are compelled by the decree to conform thereto); and they are not encouraged, because they have a tendency to take away the preference which one creditor may gain over another by his legal diligence. Besides, it has been said, that these bills may be made use of by executors and administrators, to keep creditors out of their money longer than they otherwise would be.² However correct these reasons may be for a refusal to interfere in ordinary cases, involving no difficulty, they are not sufficient to show, that the court ought not to interfere in behalf of an executor or administrator under special circumstances, where injustice to himself, or injury to the estate, may otherwise arise.³

§ 545. A doubt has, indeed, been suggested, whether a bill can be maintained against all the creditors.⁴ But, if the bill is brought against certain known creditors, who are proceeding at law, it may be asked, What is the difficulty of proceeding in the same way as is done as to all creditors, upon a bill brought by one or more creditors in behalf of themselves and all other creditors? Upon a decree for the executor or administrator to account, all the creditors are or may be required to present and prove their debts before the Master in the first case, as they are now required to do in the last case. But, upon such a bill, brought by an executor or administrator, the court will not interpose, by way of injunction, to prohibit creditors proceeding at law, until there has been a decree against the executor or administrator to account in that suit; for, otherwise, the latter might without reason make it a ground of undue delay of the creditors.⁵

§ 546. But the more ordinary case of relief, sought in equity in cases of administration, is by creditors. A creditor may file his

¹ Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 G. 6; *Buckle v. Atleo*, 2 Vern. 37. See *Rush v. Higgs*, 4 Ves. Jr. 638, 643; *Jackson v. Leap*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 281; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 4, note (u).

² *Morrice v. Bank of England*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 224; *Backwell's case*, 1 Vern. 153, 155; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 3, note (u).

³ Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 G. 6.

⁴ *Rush v. Higgs*, 4 Ves. Jr. 638, 643.

⁵ *Ibid.*

bill for payment of his own debt, and seek a discovery of assets for this purpose only. If he does so, and the bill is sustained, and an account is decreed to be taken, the court will, upon the footing of such an account, proceed to make a final decree in favor of the creditor, without sending him back to law for the recovery of his debt; for this is one of the cases in which a court of equity, being once in rightful possession of a cause for a discovery and account, will proceed to a final decree upon all the merits.¹ Upon a bill thus brought by a single creditor for his own debt only, no general account of debts is usually directed to be taken; but the common course is, to direct an account of the personal estate, and of that particular debt, which is ordered to be paid in the due course of administration.²

§ 547. The more usual course, however, pursued in the case of creditors, is for one or more creditors to file a bill (commonly called a creditor's bill) by and in behalf of him, or themselves, and all other creditors who shall come under the decree, for an account of the assets, and a due settlement of the estate.³ And this applies as well when the party suing is a creditor whose debt is payable *in presenti*, as when his debt is due *in futuro*, if it be *debitum in presenti solvendum in futuro*; ⁴ and whether he has a mortgage or not.⁵ Bills of this sort have been allowed upon the mere principle

¹ Attorney General *v.* Cornthwaite, 2 Cox, 44. See McKay *v.* Green, 3 Johns. Ch. 58; Thompson *v.* Brown, 4 Johns. Ch. 619, 630 to 643; Morrice *v.* Bank of England, Cas. Temp. Talb. 220.

² Attorney General *v.* Cornthwaite, 2 Cox, 44; Morrice *v.* Bank of England, Cas. Temp. Talb. 217; Anon., 3 Atk. 572; Perry *v.* Phelps, 10 Ves. 38. Although this is the usual course, in the case of a creditor seeking an account and payment of his own debt only; it is not, therefore, to be considered that the court itself is absolutely incompetent, upon such a bill, to make a more general decree in the form of a decree upon a general creditor's bill. On the contrary, a case may be made out upon the answer and proofs, which might render it, if not indispensable, at least highly expedient, for the purposes of justice to adopt the latter course. See Ram on Assets, &c. ch. 24, § 2; Martin *v.* Martin, 1 Ves. 213, 214; Sheppard *v.* Kent, Prec. Ch. 190, 193; s. c. 2 Vern. 435; Anon., 3 Atk. 572; Perry *v.* Phelps, 10 Ves. 38, 40, 41; Rush *v.* Higgs, 4 Ves. 638; Thompson *v.* Brown, 4 Johns. Ch. 610, 630, 643, 646.

³ See the case of The Creditors of Sir Charles Cox, 3 P. Will. 343.

⁴ Whitmore *v.* Osborn, 2 Younge & Coll. (N. R.) 13, 17.

⁵ Greenwood *v.* Firth, 2 Hare, 241, note; Aldridge *v.* Westbrook, 5 Beav. 138; Shey *v.* Bennet, 2 Younge & Coll. (N. R.) 405; White *v.* Hillacre, 3 Younge & Coll. 597, 609, 610; Story, Eq. Pl. § 101, 158.

that, as executors and administrators have vast powers of preference at law, courts of equity ought, upon the principle that equality is equity, to interpose upon the application of any creditor by such a bill, to secure a distribution of the assets, without preference to any one or more creditors.¹ And, as a decree in equity is held of equal dignity and importance with a judgment at law, a decree upon a bill of this sort, being for the benefit of all creditors, makes them all creditors by decree upon an equality with creditors by judgment, so as to exclude, from the time of such decree, all preferences in favor of the latter.²

§ 548. The usual decree, in the case of creditors' bills against the executor or administrator, is (as it is commonly phrased) *quod computet*, that is to say, it directs the Master to take the accounts between the deceased and all his creditors; and to cause the creditors, upon due public notice, to come before him to prove their debts, at a certain place, and within a limited period; and it also directs the Master to take an account of all the personal estate of the deceased in the hands of the executor or administrator, and the same to be applied in payment of the debts and other charges, in a due course of administration.³ In all cases of this sort, each creditor is entitled to appear before the Master, and may there, if he chooses, contest the claim of any other creditor, in the same manner as if it were an adversary suit.⁴

[* § 548 a. But although the usual decree is as above stated upon a bill by a creditor, in behalf of himself and all other creditors; this decree is not applicable (as it seems) to cases where the executor or administrator admits assets; for he thereby admits himself liable for the payment of the debt; and, in such a case, the

¹ *Rush v. Higgs*, 4 Ves. Jr. 638, 643; *Gilpin v. Lady Southampton*, 18 Ves. 469; *Martin v. Martin*, 1 Ves. 210; *Thompson v. Brown*, 4 Johns. Ch. 619, 630, 643.

² *Ibid.*; *Morrice v. Bank of England*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 217; *Perry v. Phelps*, 10 Ves. 38, 39, 40; *Brooks v. Reynolds*, 1 Bro. Ch. 183; *Paxton v. Douglas*, 8 Ves. 520; *Thompson v. Brown*, 4 Johns. Ch. 619.

³ *Van Heythuysen*, Eq. Draft. title, *Decrees*, p. 647; *The Creditors of Sir Charles Cox*, 3 P. Will. 343; *Sheppard v. Kent*, Prec. Ch. 190; s. c. 2 Vern. 435; *Kenyon v. Worthington*, 2 Dick. 668; *Thompson v. Brown*, 4 Johns. Ch. 619.

⁴ *Owens v. Dickenson*, 1 Craig. & Phill. 48, 56. See as to the form of a decree in an administration suit, in case all the parties interested should not be parties at the hearing, *Fisk v. Norton*, 2 Hare, 381.

plaintiff may have a decree for the payment of his own debt only, without any decree for a general account; for the other creditors are not prejudiced by such a decree for the payment of the plaintiff's debt, under such circumstances.¹

§ 549. As soon as the decree to account is made in such a suit, brought in behalf of all the creditors, and not before, the executor or administrator is entitled to an injunction out of chancery, to prevent any of the creditors from suing him at law, or proceeding in any suits already commenced, except under the direction and control of the court of equity, where the decree is passed.² The object of the court, under such circumstances, is to compel all the

¹ Woodgate v. Field, 2 Hare, 211, 212. Mr. Vice-Chancellor Wigram on that occasion said: "The reason for, and the principle of the usual form of decree, are stated in Owens v. Dickenson (Cr. & Ph. 48), but that reasoning has no application where assets are admitted, for the executor thereby makes himself liable to the payment of the debt. In such a case, the other creditors cannot be prejudiced by a decree for payment of the plaintiff's debt; and the object of the special form of the decree in a creditor's suit fails. I entertained no doubt upon this point, nor can I, upon inquiry, find that it was ever doubted in the other branches of the court. In effect, the rule is proved by the fact that the creditor and defendant, the executor, may settle the matter pending the suit, by the latter paying the debt and costs of the suit. And it has twice been decided at the rolls, that the court will order the same thing to be done, even when the suit had proceeded to a considerable extent. If, then, the court would compel a creditor to accept payment of his debt when the executor offers to pay it, with the costs of suit, where is the line to be drawn beyond which the plaintiff cannot be allowed to have the exclusive benefit of his own suit? I am satisfied that in this case there ought to be a decree for immediate payment. It was objected, however, that in Sterndale v. Hankinson, Sir A. Hart said that, on the filing of a creditor's bill, every creditor has an inchoate right in the suit; the meaning of that expression is, that a right then commences which may indeed fail, but may also be perfected by decree; and it is not inaccurately called an inchoate right. After the decree every creditor has an interest in the suit; but the question is, whether the plaintiff, until decree, is not *dominus litis*, so that he may deal with the suit as he pleases. There is nothing to prevent other creditors from filing bills for a like purpose; and there is nothing more common than for several suits to exist together, and the court permits them to go on together until a decree in one of them is obtained, because it is possible, before the decree, that the litigating creditor may stop his suit.

² Morrice v. Bank of England, Cas. Temp. Talb. 217; Martin v. Martin, 1 Ves. 211, 212; Perry v. Phelps, 10 Ves. 38, 39; Brooks v. Reynolds, 1 Bro. Ch. 183, and Mr. Belt's note; Douglas v. Clay, 1 Dick. 393; Kenyon v. Worthington, 2 Dick. 668; Paxton v. Douglas, 8 Ves. 520; Jackson v. Leap, 1 Jac. & Walk. 231, and note; McKay v. Green, 3 Johns. Ch. 58; Burles v. Popplewell, 10 Sim. 383. See Underwood v. Hatton, 5 Beav. 31.

creditors to come in and prove their debts before the Master; and to have the proper payments and discharges made under the authority of the court; so that the executor or administrator may not be harassed by multiplicity of suits, or a race of diligence be encouraged between different creditors, each striving for an undue mastery and preference.¹ And this action of the court presupposes, that all the legal rights of every creditor, and the validity of his debt, may be, and, indeed, must be, determined in equity, upon the same principles as it would be at law.² But, in order to

¹ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 538 to 543.

² *Whitaker v. Wright*, 2 Hare, 310. On this occasion, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Wigram said: "With respect to the form of a decree in a creditor's suit, the court does not treat the decree as conclusive proof of the debt. It is clear, that it is not so treated for all purposes; for any other creditor may challenge the debt; *Owens v. Dickenson* (1 Cr. & Ph. 48); and it is equally clear that in practice, the executor himself is allowed to impeach it. If, in a case where the plaintiff sues on behalf of himself and all the other creditors, and the defendants, who represent the estate, do not admit assets (see *Woodgate v. Field*), it is objected at the hearing, that the debt is not well proved, — the court tries the question only whether there is sufficient proof upon which to found a decree; and however clearly the debt may be proved in the cause, the decree decides nothing more than that the debt is sufficiently proved to entitle the plaintiff to go into the Master's office; and a new case may be made in the Master's office, and new evidence may be there tendered. The real question is, in what way the new case is to be tried, or what is the course to be pursued in the Master's office? The plaintiff says that the course should be the same as at law, and that he brings his legal rights with him into equity; and, subject to some qualification, I cannot refuse my assent to the plaintiff's proposition. When a decree is made in a creditor's suit, under which all the creditors may come in, this court will not permit the estate to be embarrassed by proceedings which might conflict with each other, to the prejudice of the executor or administrator, *Perry v. Phelps* (10 Ves. 34); but nothing would be more unjust than that the court should restrain the creditor from proceeding to enforce his rights at law, except upon the principle of allowing him to bring his legal rights with him into the office of the court, which it substitutes for the proceedings at law, *Dornford v. Dornford* (12 Ves. 127); *Berrington v. Evans* (1 You. 276); and the circumstance, that the creditor is also the plaintiff in the suit in equity, makes no difference in that respect. The only qualifications which now occur to me of the general rule, that a legal creditor brings all his legal rights with him are founded, first, upon the circumstance that in certain special cases, a court of equity, in the ordinary course of administering assets, will distinguish a voluntary bond from one given for value, *Lady Cox's case* (3 P. Wms. 339); *Jones v. Powell* (Eq. Cas. Abr. 84, pl. 2); *Gilham v. Locke* (9 Ves. 612); *Assignees of Gardiner v. Shannon* (2 Sch. & Lefr. 228); and, secondly, that in all cases, this court requires an affidavit of the truth of the debt from the creditor, which at law is not required. This affidavit is re-

prevent any abuse of such bills, by connivance between an executor or administrator and a creditor, it is now a common practice to grant an injunction only, when the answer or affidavit of the executor or administrator states the amount of the assets, and upon the terms of his bringing the assets into court, or obeying such other order of the court, as the circumstances of the case may require.¹ The same remedial justice is applied, where the

quired to extend to the consideration of a simple contract debt, — but not to the consideration of bond or other specialty debts. The third qualification, — if, indeed, there be any other than those which I have mentioned, — is that which is said to be introduced by the case of *Rundell v. Lord Rivers* (Phillips, 88)."

¹ *Gilpin v. Lady Southampton*, 18 Ves. 469; *Clarke v. Ormonde*, Jac. 122, 123, 124, 125; *Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, p. 311. In *Lee v. Park*, 1 Keen, 714, 719 to 724, Lord Langdale (Master of the Rolls) went into an elaborate examination of the doctrine on this subject, and refused to stay the execution of a creditor, who had obtained a judgment before the decree to account in chancery. Although it is long, yet it gives so full an account of the history, progress, and present state of the jurisdiction, that it seems proper to be here given at large. "It has been argued," says he, "that, in cases of this nature, the court pays no regard to the question, whether the decree or judgment has priority in time, but considers only the quality of the judgment, and that the judgment in this case, being a judgment to recover *de bonis testatoris*, the executors are, as of course, entitled to restrain the judgment creditors from issuing execution. I do not accede to that argument. The jurisdiction, in these cases, was first established upon questions which arose between judgments at law and decrees in equity, for payment of ascertained debts out of the assets. It was determined, that such decrees and such judgments were, in the administration of legal assets, to be considered of equal value, and that the one which was prior in time (whether decree or judgment) should be first satisfied out of the assets. *Morrice v. The Bank of England*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 217; s. c. more fully, 3 Swanst. 575, and 2 Bro. P. C. 465, edit. Toml.; *Martin v. Martin*, 1 Ves. Sen. 211. In the beginning, a judgment, obtained after a decree *quod computet* (not being a decree for payment of an ascertained sum out of the assets), was preferred. *Ferrers v. Shirley*, cited 10 Ves. 39. But, subsequently, Lord Thurlow put the jurisdiction on this: — that the court, having decreed an account of debts and assets, and ordered payment in a due course of administration, must be considered to have taken the fund into his own hands, and could not suffer its decree to be rendered nugatory by altering the course of administration, but ought to protect the executor in obeying its decrees. And he therefore granted injunctions to restrain proceedings at law, after a decree *quod computet*. *Kenyon v. Worthington*, 2 Dick. 668. And, as it was the practice in creditors' suits, for the plaintiff, suing for himself and others, to prove his own debt prior to the hearing, there was, perhaps, not much difficulty in considering a decree for the administration of assets in such a suit, as in the nature of a judgment for all the creditors. But Lord Thurlow, acting on the principle to which he attributed the jurisdiction, gave the like authority to a decree *quod computet*, which was ob-

application, instead of being made by creditors, is made by legatees or trustees.¹

tained in a suit, instituted by the trustees under a testator's will, and to which no creditor was a party. *Brooks v. Reynolds*, 1 Bro. C. C. 183. It was, however, contended that the creditor was not to be deprived of the benefit of a judgment, which he had obtained prior to the decree. *Goate v. Fryer*, 2 Cox, 201; *Largan v. Bowen*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 296. In the case of *Paxton v. Douglas* (8 Ves. 520), the creditor had obtained an interlocutory judgment prior to the application for an injunction. What was the state of the proceeding at law, at the date of the decree, is not stated; and no question on the subject appears to have been raised. In some subsequent cases, where the decree had priority in point of time, a question was raised, whether the executor, by improper pleading, or by confessing judgment, did not lose his right to be protected by an injunction; and, upon these cases, it has been considered, that, if the executor so pleaded as to entitle the creditor, plaintiff at law, to a judgment, to recover his demand *de bonis propriis*, this court could not restrain the execution. *Brook v. Skinner*, 2 Mer. 481, n.; *Terrewest v. Featherby*, 2 Mer. 480; *Drewry v. Thacker*, 3 Swanst. 529; *Clarke v. Lord Ormonde*, Jac. 108; *Lord v. Wormleighton*, Jac. 148. In the cases of *Price v. Evans* (4 Sim. 514), and *Kent v. Pickering* (5 Sim. 569), the Vice Chancellor granted injunctions which only restrained the creditor from taking out execution against the assets of the intestate or testator. But it has been held, that suffering judgment to go by default, or putting in pleas considered false, if done merely for the purpose of gaining time to apply to this court, did not deprive the executor of his right to protection. *Dyer v. Kearsley*, 2 Mer. 482, n.; *Fielden v. Fielden*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 255. In a useful work on the Law of Executors (*Williams's Law of Executors*, 1181), it has been observed, that, in the consideration of some of these cases, some misconception seems to have prevailed respecting the effect of the executor's pleas, and of the judgment against him; and considering what, in the argument of this case, has been called the quality of the judgment, it seems proper to notice, that a judgment against an executor, whether by default or on demurrer, or upon verdict on any plea pleaded, except a general or special *plene administravit*, is conclusive upon him, that he has assets to answer the demand. *Leonard v. Simpson*, 2 Bing. N. C. 176; *Palmer v. Waller*, 1 Mees. & Wel. 689. If the action can only be supported against him in his character of executor, and he pleads any plea which admits that he has acted as such (except a release to himself), the judgment against him is, that the plaintiff do recover the debt and costs, to be levied out of the assets of the testator, if the defendant have so much; but if not, then the costs out of the defendant's own goods. Such is the form of the judgment, where the defendant has pleaded *non est factum testatoris*, *non assumpsit*, or release to the testator, although all of these pleas are held to admit assets. But, upon a subsequent deficiency of assets, the executor has to pay out of his own goods, because, in law, the judgment is held to be a proof that he had

¹ *Perry v. Phelps*, 10 Ves. 38; *Brooks v. Reynolds*, 1 Bro. Ch. 183; *Jackson v. Leap*, 1 Jack. & Walker, 231, and note.

§ 550. The considerations already mentioned apply to cases where the assets are purely of a legal nature; and no peculiar assets to satisfy it. Upon the sheriff's return of *nulla bona*, the plaintiff may issue a *scire facias*, or bring an action of debt on the judgment, suggesting a *devastavit*. In the proceedings on the *scire facias*, the plaintiff has not to prove that the executor has property of the testator in his hands; and, in the action, the executor cannot plead *plene administravit*, but only deny the *devastavit*; and of that, the judgment against him and the sheriff's return of *nulla bona* are evidence; and, in his action, the creditor obtains judgment to recover his demand *de bonis propriis*. The case of *Drewry v. Thacker* (3 Swanst. 529) is, as far as I am aware, the only case in which the executor has been in any degree protected against execution upon a judgment obtained prior to the decree. The administratrix, in that case, had given *cognovits* to Stanley and Lucas, two bond creditors, with stay of execution, if payment was made by instalments at certain times. After default had been made, a decree for administration was obtained, and, after the plaintiff at law had notice of the decree, the sheriff took the intestate's goods, in the hands of the administratrix, in execution. The Vice Chancellor, Sir John Leach, ordered the sheriff to restore the goods, on payment of costs; and, further, that if, upon the administration of the estate by the court, there should be a deficiency of assets to pay Stanley and Lucas in full, they were to be at liberty to proceed at law against the administratrix, as if the sheriff had returned *nulla bona prator* the sum received by Stanley and Lucas upon the administration of the assets in this case, she, by her counsel, undertaking not to dispute the suggestion of such return in the writ at law. Now, Lord Eldon, very recently before the date of this order, in the case of *Terrewest v. Featherby*, had observed, 'That the creditor's judgment would be of no service to him, if he were delayed here until it could be ascertained whether there were assets of the testator to answer his demand, which might not be till after all chance of recovering against the executor *de bonis propriis* was entirely gone.' The order of the Vice Chancellor, in *Drewry v. Thacker*, did, however, so delay the creditor, and, on a motion before Lord Eldon to discharge the order he seems to have found considerable difficulty in dealing with it. He clearly considered that if the administratrix was liable at law, she was liable to a greater extent than she was left by the Vice Chancellor's order; and that there had been no instance, where the proceedings at law had been restrained after judgment *de bonis testatoris*, and *si non de bonis propriis* of an executor, and execution issued, on a decree subsequently obtained for an administration of the assets; and he said, that his memory furnished him with the recollection of no case, in which the court had interposed, as in the Vice Chancellor's order, namely, by restraining the proceedings at law for a time, but considering those proceedings effectual for some purposes, to be carried into execution at a future time, when the fruits to be collected from them had been ascertained by the result of certain proceedings in equity. In the result he made no order upon the motion before him; so that the order of the Vice Chancellor was, in effect, left undisturbed, but under circumstances which prevent it from being regarded as an authority. In the subsequent case of *Clarke v. Lord Ormonde* (Jac. 108), in which the point was not raised, Lord Eldon is reported to have said, that, even if a creditor has got a

circumstances require the interposition of courts of equity, except those appertaining to the necessity of taking an account, and having a discovery, and decreeing a final settlement of the estate. But in a great variety of cases, the jurisdiction of courts of equity becomes indispensable, from the fact, that no other courts possess any adequate jurisdiction to reach the entire merits, or dispose of the entire merits. This must necessarily be the case where there are equitable assets as well as legal assets, and, also, where the assets are required to be marshalled, in order to a full and perfect administration of the estate, and to prevent any creditor, legatee, or distributee from being deprived of his own proper benefit, by reason of any prior claims which obstruct it.

§ 551. And, first, in relation to equitable assets. That portion only of the assets of the deceased party are deemed legal assets, which by law are directly liable, in the hands of his executor or administrator, to the payment of debts and legacies.¹ It is not within the design of these commentaries to enter into a minute examination of what are deemed legal assets. But, generally speaking, they are such as can be reached in the hands of an executor or administrator by a suit at law against him, either by a common judgment, or by a judgment upon a *devastavit* against him personally.² But it is, perhaps, more accurate to say, that legal assets

judgment before a decree, though he may come in and prove as such, he must not take out execution; and, in reference to the conduct of the parties, and perhaps, to the nature of the claim, there may be such cases; but such is not the ordinary rule." See also *Ranken v. Harwood*, 5 Hare, 215.

¹ *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 473; *Ram. on Assets*, ch. 8, p. 143; *id.* ch. 27, p. 317; 3 *Wooddeson*, Lect. 59, p. 482 to 488. See, in the *English Law Mag.* for Feb. 1844, p. 27, a dissertation on what constitutes the true distinction and test between legal and equitable assets. See 2 *White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cases*, p. 72, and note.

² See *Farr v. Newman*, 4 T. R. 621; *Whale v. Booth*, 4 T. R. 625, note; s. c. 4 *Doug.* 36. In some cases, it is necessary to go into a court of equity, to enforce payment out of what are properly legal assets. Thus, for instance, if there should be a lease for years, or a bond debt, or an annuity in a trustee's name, belonging to the deceased, there, although a creditor could not come at it without the aid of a court of equity, yet the assets would be treated as legal assets, and should be applied in the course of administration as such. *Wilson v. Fielding*, 2 Vern. 763; The case of *Sir Charles Cox's Creditors*, 2 P. Will. 342, 343; 2 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1, note (*f*). So a term of years, taken in the name of A., in trust for B., is legal assets, although recoverable in equity only. *Ibid.*; 3 P. Will. 342, 343, and Mr. Cox's note (2); *Hartwell v. Chitters*, *Ambler*, 308, and Mr. Blunt's note. By the statute of Charles II. ch. 3, the

are such as come into the hands and power of an executor or administrator, or such as he is intrusted with by law, *virtute officii*, to dispose of in the course of administration.¹ In other words, whatever an executor or administrator takes, *qua* executor or administrator, or in respect to his office, is to be considered as legal assets.²

§ 552. Equitable assets are, on the other hand, all assets which are chargeable with the payment of debts or legacies in equity; and which do not fall under the description of legal assets. They are called equitable assets, because, in obtaining payment out of them, they can be reached only by the aid and instrumentality of a court of equity.³ They are also called equitable for another reason; and that is, that the rules of distribution by which they are governed, are different from those of the distribution of legal assets. In general, it may be said, that equitable assets are of two kinds: the first is, where assets are created such by the intent of the party; the second is, where they result from the nature of the estate made chargeable. Thus, for instance, if a testator devises land to trustees, to sell for the payment of debts, the assets resulting from the execution of the trust, are equitable assets upon the plain intent of the testator, notwithstanding the trustees are also made his executors, for, by directing the sale to be for the payment of debts generally, he excludes all preferences, and the property would not otherwise be liable to the payment of simple contract debts.⁴ The same principle applies, if the testator merely charges his lands with the payment of his debts.⁵ On the other hand, if the estate be of

trusts of an inheritance in land are liable for the payment of bond debts, which make such trust estates legal assets, although they can be enforced only in equity. See 2 Freeman, 150, C. 130; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1, note (*f*); *Moses v. Murgatroyd*, 1 Johns. Ch. 119, 130.

¹ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1; Bac. Abridg. *Executors and Administrators*, H.; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 59, p. 484 to 488.

² 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1, and note (*e*); *Deg v. Deg*, 2 P. Will. 416, and Mr. Cox's note.

³ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1, and notes (*c*), (*f*), (*g*); *Wilson v. Fielding*, 2 Vern. 763; *Gott v. Atkinson*, Willes, 523, 524; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 473; *Ram on Assets*, ch. 27, p. 317; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 59, p. 486, 487.

⁴ *Lewin v. Okeley*, 2 Atk. 50; *Newton v. Bennet*, 1 Bro. Ch. 135; *Silk v. Prime*, 1 Bro. Ch. 138, note; *Bailey v. Ekins*, 7 Ves. 319; *Shiphard v. Lutwidge*, 8 Ves. 26, 30; *Benson v. Leroy*, 4 Johns. Ch. 651; *Clay v. Willis*, 1 B. & Cressw. 364; *Barker v. May*, 9 B. & Cressw. 489.

⁵ *Ibid.*

an equitable nature, and be chargeable with debts, the fund is to be deemed equitable assets, unless by some statute it is expressly made legal assets; for it cannot be reached except through the instrumentality of a court of equity.¹ And it may be laid down as a general principle, that every thing is considered as equitable assets, which the debtor has made subject to his debts generally, and which, without his act, would not have been subject to the payment of his debts generally.²

§ 552 *a*. Wherever real estate is by statute made liable for the payment of the debts of the deceased, there it constitutes legal assets.³ But, notwithstanding such provision, if the testator should by his will charge his real estate with his debt, there the real estate so charged would be equitable assets.⁴

[* § 552 *b*. This question came before the House of Lords, during the present year⁵ (1860), when it was declared by Lord Cranworth, that any thing which an administrator is entitled to receive, as such, *virtute officii*, can never be equitable assets; and in considering whether assets are legal or equitable, the question is not, whether the estate is recoverable through the agency of the courts of law, or of equity, but whether it is money which the personal representative is entitled to recover, independently of any directions of the testator.]

§ 553. In the course of the administration of assets, courts of equity follow the same rules in regard to legal assets, which are adopted by courts of law; and give the same priority to the different classes of creditors, which is enjoyed at law; thus maintaining

¹ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1, note (*g*).

² 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1, note (*e*); Ram on Assets, ch. 17, p. 317. In *Silk v. Prime*, 1 Bro. Ch. 138, note, Lord Camden took notice of the early cases, which had decided, that where land is devised to be sold by executors, *qua* executors, or devised to executors, *qua* executors, to be sold for payment of debts, the assets were purely legal (Co. Litt. 112 *b*, 113 *a*); and he added, "I can hardly now suggest a case where the assets would be legal, but where the executor has a naked power to sell, *qua* executor." See also *Girling v. Lee*, 1 Vern. 63, and Raithby's notes. It is questionable, whether, even in this latter case, the assets would now be held to be legal. See *Barker v. May*, 9 B. & Cressw. 489, 493; *Paschall v. Ketterich*, Dyer, 151 *b*; *Anon.*, Dyer, 264 *b*; Bac. Abridg. *Legacy*, M.; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1, note (*e*); *Deg v. Deg*, 2 P. Will. 416, Cox's note.

³ *Goodchild v. Ferret*, 5 Beav. 398.

⁴ *Charlton v. Wright*, 12 Simons, 274.

⁵ [* *Attorney General v. Brunning*, 6 Jur. n. s. 1083.].

a practical exposition of the maxim, *Æquitas sequitur legem*.¹ In the like manner, courts of equity recognize and enforce all antecedent liens, claims, and charges *in rem*, existing upon the property according to their priorities; whether these charges are of a legal or of an equitable nature, and whether the assets are legal or equitable.²

§ 554. But in regard to equitable assets (subject to the exception already stated), courts of equity in the actual administration of them, adopt very different rules from those adopted in courts of law in the administration of legal assets. Thus, in equity, it is a general rule that equitable assets shall be distributed equally, and *pari passu*, among all the creditors, without any reference to the priority or dignity of the debts; for courts of equity regard all debts in conscience as equal *jure naturali*, and equally entitled to be paid; and here they follow their own favorite maxim that equality is equity; *Æquitas est quasi æqualitas*.³ And if the fund falls short, all the creditors are required to abate in proportion.⁴

¹ See 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1, 2; *Wride v. Clarke*, 1 Dick. 382; *Averell v. Loucks*, 6 Barbour, S. C. 478; *Morrice v. Bank of England*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 220, 221.

² *Freemanult v. Dedire*, 1 P. Will. 429; *Finch v. Earl of Winchelsea*, 1 P. Will. 277, 278; *Burgh v. Francis*, 1 Eq. Abridg. 320, Pl. 1; *Girling v. Lee*, 1 Vern. 63, and Raithby's notes; *Plunket v. Penson*, 2 Atk. 290; *Pope v. Gwinn*, 8 Ves. 28, note; *Morgan v. Sherrard*, 1 Vern. 293; *Cole v. Warden*, 1 Vern. 410, and note; *Wilson v. Fielding*, 2 Vern. 763, 764; *Foly's case*, 2 Freem. 49; *Wride v. Clarke*, 1 Dick. 382; *Sharpe v. Earl of Scarborough*, 4 Ves. 538.

³ *Co. Litt.* 24; *Hixam v. Witham*, 1 Ch. Cas. 248; *Gott v. Atkinson*, Willes, 521; *Turner v. Turner*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 45; *Creditors of Sir Charles Cox*, 3 P. Will. 343, 344; *Deg v. Deg*, 2 P. Will. 412, 416; *Wride v. Clarke*, 1 Dick. 382; *Morrice v. Bank of England*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 220; *Wilson v. Paul*, 8 Sim. 63.

⁴ *Hixham v. Witham*, 1 Freem. 301; s. c. 1 Ch. Cas. 248; *Deg v. Deg*, 2 P. Will. 412; *Wride v. Clarke*, 1 Dick. 382; *Foly's case*, 2 Freem. 49; *Woolstonecroft v. Long*, 2 Freem. 175; s. c. 2 Eq. Abridg. 459; 1 Ch. Cas. 32; 3 Ch. 12. The civil law, like the common law, had different classes of debts, to which is annexed different privileges, or priorities, founded, indeed, upon principles more general and more sound than those of the common law, in its classification. There were in the civil law three orders of creditors. (1.) Those who go before all others, and take priority among themselves according to the distinctions of their privileges. (2.) Those who have mortgages, and rank after the privileged creditors according to the dates of their respective mortgages. (3.) Those who are creditors by bonds, or others who have only personal ac-

[* § 554 *a*. The priority of claimants upon equitable assets in this country is not affected by the law of the place of contract. Where, therefore, an Englishman, in Venezuela, entered into a contract in such a form as gave the creditor priority over the other creditors, it was held that a fund in England, constituting equitable assets of the debtor must be divided among the creditors without regard to any such priority.¹]

§ 555. It frequently happens, also, that lands and other property, not strictly legal assets, are charged not only with the payment of debts, but also with the payment of legacies. In that case, all the legatees take *pari passu*; and if the equitable assets (after payment of the debts) are not sufficient to pay all the legacies, the legatees are all required to abate in proportion, unless some priority is specially given by the testator to particular legatees; for, *prima facie*, the testator must be presumed to intend that all his legacies shall be equally paid.² But, suppose the case to be, that the equitable assets are sufficient to pay all the debts; but, after such payment, not sufficient to pay any of the legacies; and the property is charged with the payment of both debts and legacies. In such a conflict of rights, the question must arise, whether the creditors and legatees are to share in proportion, *pari passu*; or the creditors are to enjoy a priority of satisfaction out of the equitable assets. This was formerly a matter of no inconsiderable doubt; and it was contended with much apparent strength of reasoning that, as both creditors and legatees, in such a case, take out of the fund by the bounty of the testator, and not of strict right, they ought to share in proportion, *pari passu*. After some struggle in the courts of equity upon this point,³ it is at length settled that, although as between themselves, in regard to equitable assets, the creditors are all equal, and are to share in proportion, *pari passu*; yet, as between them and legatees, the creditors are entitled to a priority and preference; and that legatees are to take nothing until the debts are all paid.

tions (the first two have liens or privileges *in rem*), and who come in, therefore, together, and share equally in proportion to their debts. 1 Domat, B. 3, tit. 1, § 5, and especially, art. 34.

[*¹ Pardo v. Bingham, Law Rep. 6 Eq. 485.]

² Brown v. Brown, 1 Keen, 275.

³ See Anon., 2 Vern. 133; Hixam v. Witham, 1 Ch. Cas. 248; s. c. 1 Freem. 305; Anon., 2 Vern. 405; Walker v. Meager, 2 P. Will. 550.

§ 556. The ground of this decision is, that it is the duty of every man to be just, before he is generous; and no one can well doubt the moral obligation of any man to provide for the payment of all his debts. The presumption, therefore, in the absence of all other words, showing a different intent (which intent would, in such a case, still prevail), is, that a testator means to provide first, for the discharge of his moral duties, and next, for the objects of his bounty, and not to confound the one with the other. For, otherwise, the testator would, in truth, and in *foro conscientiae*, be disposing of another's debt, and not making gifts *ultra æs alienum*.¹ The good sense of this latter reasoning can scarcely escape observation. It proceeds upon the just and benignant interpretation of the intention of the party to fulfil his moral obligations in the just order, which natural law would assign to them.

[* § 556 a. The personalty being the primary fund for the payment, both of debts and legacies, where a legacy was specially charged upon land, there being sufficient personal estate in the hands of the executor to pay the legacy, after meeting all other charges, and he having squandered the same, it was held that the legatee could not resort to the land for payment; neither could he compel other legatees, who had obtained payment, to refund, in order to meet his deficiency, they being entitled to retain the advantage of their greater diligence.² Property undisposed of by the will always forms the primary fund for the payment of debts and other expenses incident to administration.³]

§ 557. In cases where the assets are partly legal, and partly equitable, courts of equity will not interfere to take away the legal preference of any creditors to the legal assets. But, if any creditor has been partly paid out of the legal assets by insisting on his preference, and he seeks satisfaction of the residue of his debt out of the equitable assets, he will be postponed, till all the other creditors, not possessing such a preference, have received out of such

¹ *Hixam v. Witham*, 1 Ch. Cas. 258; s. c. 1 Freem. 305; *Walker v. Meager*, 2 P. Will. 551, 552; s. c. *Moseley*, 204; *Petre v. Bruen*, cited *ibid.*; *Greaves v. Powell*, 2 Vern. 248, and Mr. Raithby's note (2); 1 Eq. Abridg. 141, Pl. 3; *Kidney v. Coussmaker*, 12 Ves. 154.

² [* *Sims v. Sims*, 2 Stockton, Ch. 158. But this seems to be carrying the advantage of diligence to the very extreme. See *Terhune v. Colton*, 2 Stock. 21.

³ *Elliot v. Posten*, 4 Jones, Eq. 493; *Freeman v. Okey*, 3 Jones, Eq. 473.]

equitable assets an equal proportion of their respective debts.¹ This doctrine is founded upon, and flows from that which we have been already considering, that in natural justice and conscience all debts are equal; that the debtor himself is equally bound to satisfy them all;² and that equality is equity. When, therefore, a court of equity is called upon to assist a creditor, it has a right to insist, before relief is granted, that he who seeks equity shall do equity; that he shall not make use of the law in his own favor to exclude equity, and at the same time insist that equity shall aid the defects of the law, to the injury of equally meritorious claimants. The usual decree in cases of this sort is, that "If any of the creditors by specialty have exhausted (or shall exhaust) any part of the testator's personal estate in satisfaction of their debts, then they are not to come upon or receive any further satisfaction out of the testator's real estate (or other equitable assets) until the other creditors shall thereout be made up equal with them."³ This is sometimes called marshalling the assets.⁴ But that appellation more appropriately belongs (as we shall immediately see) to another mode of equitable interference. The present is rather an exercise of equitable jurisdiction in refusing relief, unless upon the terms of doing equity.

§ 558. In the next place, as to marshalling assets (strictly so called), in the course of the administration.⁵ In the sense of the lexicographers, to marshal, is to arrange or rank in order; and in this sense, the marshalling of assets would be, to arrange or rank assets in the due order of administration. This primary sense of the language has been transferred into the vocabulary of courts of equity; and has there received a somewhat peculiar and technical sense, although still germane to its original signification. In the sense of the courts of equity, the marshalling of assets is such an arrangement of the different funds under administration as shall enable all the parties, having equities thereon, to receive their due proportions, notwithstanding any intervening interests, liens, or

¹ Sheppard v. Kent, 2 Vern. 435; Deg v. Deg, 3 P. Will. 417; Haslewood v. Pope, 3 P. Will. 323; Morrice v. Bank of England, Cas. Temp. Talb. 220; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1.

² Morrice v. Bank of England, Cas. Temp. Talb. 219, 220, 221; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1.

³ Plunket v. Penson, 2 Atk. 294; Wride v. Clarke, 1 Dick. 382.

⁴ See Aldrich v. Cooper, 8 Ves. 388, 394.

⁵ Ibid.; *post*, § 633 to 643.

other claims of particular persons to prior satisfaction out of a portion of these funds.¹ Thus, where there exist two or more funds, and there are several claimants against them, and at law one of the parties may resort to either fund for satisfaction, but the others can come upon one only; there, courts of equity exercise the authority to marshal (as it is called) the funds, and by this means enable the parties whose remedy at law is confined to one fund only, to receive due satisfaction.² The general principle upon which courts of equity interfere in these cases is, that, without such interference, he who has a title to the double fund, would possess an unreasonable power of defeating the claimants upon either fund, by taking his satisfaction out of the other, to the exclusion of them. So that, in fact, it would be entirely in his election, whether they should receive any satisfaction or not. Now, courts of equity treat such an exercise of power as wholly unjust and unconscientious; and therefore will interfere, not, indeed, to modify or absolutely to destroy the power, but to prevent it from being made an instrument of caprice, injustice, or imposition. Equity, in affording redress in such cases, does little more than apply the maxim, *Nemo ex alterius detrimento feri debet locupletior*.³

§ 559. And this principle is by no means confined to the administration of assets; but it is applied to a vast variety of other cases (as we shall hereafter see); as, for instance, to cases of two mortgages, where one covers two estates, and the other but one; to cases of extents by the Crown; and, indeed, to cases of double securities generally.⁴ It may be laid down as the general rule of the courts of equity in cases of this sort, that, if a creditor has two funds, he shall take his satisfaction (if he may) out of that fund, upon which another creditor has no lien; and the

¹ See 3 Wooddes. Lect. 59, p. 488, 489; *post*, § 633 to 642.

² 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 499; Ram on Assets, ch. 28, § 1, p. 329; Aldrich v. Cooper, 8 Ves. 388, 398; Lanoy v. Duke of Athol, 2 Atk. 446; *In re Cornwall*, 2 C. & L. 131; s. c. 3 Dru. & War. 173; Attorney General v. Tyndall, Ambl. 614; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 6; Selby v. Selby, 4 Russ. 336, 341. See the Reporter's Note to Phillips v. Parker, 1 Tamlyn, 136, 143.

³ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 6, and note (i). See Mills v. Eden, 10 Mod. 499; *ante*, § 327, 499; *post*, § 633 to 642.

⁴ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 202, 203; Lanoy v. Duke of Athol, 2 Atk. 446; Aldrich v. Cooper, 8 Ves. 382, 388; Cornwall, *in re*, 2 C. & L. 131; 3 Dru. & War. 173; Kempe v. Antill, 2 Bro. Ch. 11; Wright v. Simpson, 6 Ves. 714; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 6; *ante*, § 327, 499; *post*, § 633, 638, 642.

like rule is applied to other persons standing in a similar predicament.¹

§ 560. But, although the rule is so general, yet it is not to be understood without some qualifications. It is never applied except where it can be done without injustice to the creditor, or other party in interest, having a title to the double fund, and also without injustice to the common debtor.² Nor is it applied in favor of persons who are not common creditors of the same common debtor, except upon some special equity. Thus, a creditor of A. has no right, unless some peculiar equity intervenes, to insist that a creditor of A. and B. shall proceed against B.'s estate alone for the satisfaction of this debt, so that he may thereby receive a greater dividend from A.'s estate.³ So, where a creditor is a creditor upon two estates for the same debt, he will be entitled to receive dividends to the full amount from both estates, until he has been fully satisfied for his debt; for his title in such a case is not to be made to yield in favor of either estate, or the creditors of either to his own prejudice.⁴ It has, indeed, been said by Lord Hardwicke, that courts of equity have no right to marshal the assets of a person who is alive; but only the real and personal assets of a person deceased; for the assets are not subject to the jurisdiction of equity until his death.⁵ But this language is to be understood with reference to the case in which it was spoken; for there is no doubt, that there may be a marshalling of the real and personal assets of living persons under particular circumstances, where peculiar equities attach upon the one, or the other; although such cases are very rare.⁶

§ 561. The rule of courts of equity, in marshalling assets in the

¹ *Lanoy v. Athol*, 2 Atk. 446; *Colchester v. Stamford*, 2 Freem. 124; *Lacam v. Mertins*, 1 Ves. 312; *Ex parte Kendall*, 17 Ves. 514, 520; *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 388, 395; *Trimmer v. Bayne*, 9 Ves. 210, 211; *Rumbold v. Rumbold*, 3 Ves. 64; *Dorr v. Shaw*, 4 Johns. Ch. 17; *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 412; *Greenwood v. Taylor*, 1 Russell & Mylne, 185; *Gwynne v. Edwards*, 2 Russ. 289, n.; *Bute v. Cunynghame*, 2 Russ. 275; *Boazman v. Johnston*, 3 Sim. 377; *ante*, § 327, 499; *post*, § 633, 638, 642.

² See *Earl of Clarendon v. Barham*, 1 Younge & Coll. 688, 709.

³ *Ex parte Kendall*, 17 Ves. 514, 520; *post*, § 642 to 645.

⁴ *Beane v. Cox*, 6 Beav. 84.

⁵ *Lacam v. Mertins*, 1 Ves. 312.

⁶ See *Ex parte Kendall*, 17 Ves. 514; *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 388, 389, 394; *Dorr v. Shaw*, 4 Johns. Ch. 17; *Sneed v. Lord Culpepper*, 2 Eq. Abridg. 255, 260.

course of administration, is, that every claimant upon the assets of a deceased person shall be satisfied, as far as such assets can, by any arrangement consistent with the nature of their respective claims, be applied in satisfaction thereof.¹ The rule must necessarily in its application to the actual circumstances of different cases, admit, nay, must require, very different modifications of relief. It may be illustrated by the suggestion of a few cases, which present its application in a clear view, and show the limitations belonging to it.

§ 562. In the first place, if a specialty creditor, whose debt is a lien on the real estate, receive satisfaction out of the personal assets of the deceased, a simple contract creditor (who has no claim except upon those personal assets) shall in equity stand in the place of the specialty creditor against the real assets, so far as the latter shall have exhausted the personal assets in payment of his debts, and no further.² But the court will not, in cases of this sort, extend the relief to creditors further than the nature of the contract will justify it. Therefore it must be a specialty creditor of the person, whose assets are in question; such a one as might have a remedy against both the real and personal estate of the deceased debtor, or against either of them. For it is not every specialty creditor in whose place the simple contract creditors can come to affect the real assets. If the specialty creditor himself cannot affect the real estate, as, if the heirs are not bound by the specialty; or if there is no personal covenant binding the party to pay; or if the creditors are not creditors of the same person, and have not any demand against both funds, as being the property of the same person; in these and the like cases, there is no ground for the interposition of courts of equity.³

§ 563. On the other hand, if a specialty creditor, having a right to resort to two funds, has not as yet received satisfaction out of either, a court of equity will interfere, and either throw him for satisfaction upon the fund which can be affected by him only, to

¹ See *Clifton v. Burt*, 1 P. Will. 679, Mr. Cox's valuable note (1), from which I have freely drawn; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 6; *post*, § 633, note.

² *Anon.*, 2 Ch. Cas. 4; *Sagittary v. Hyde*, 1 Vern. 455; *Neave v. Alderton*, 1 Eq. Abridg. 144; *Galton v. Hancock*, 2 Atk. 436; *Clifton v. Burt*, 1 P. Will. 679, Cox's note (1); *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 413.

³ *Lacam v. Mertins*, 1 Ves. 312, 313; *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 388, 389, 390, 394; *Ex parte Kendall*, 17 Ves. 520.

the intent that the other fund shall be clear for him who can have access to the later only ;¹ or it will put the creditor to his election between the one fund and the other. And, if the creditor resorts to the fund, upon which alone the other party has any security, it will decree satisfaction *pro tanto* to the latter out of the other fund.² The usual decree in such cases is, that "In case any of the specialty creditors shall exhaust any part of the personal estate, then the simple contract creditors are to stand in their place, and receive a satisfaction *pro tanto* out of" the real assets.³

§ 564. The same principle applies to the case of a mortgagee, who exhausts the personal estate in the payment of his debt. In such a case the simple contract creditors will be allowed to stand in the place of the mortgagee, in regard to the real estate bound by the mortgage.⁴ And, where the personal assets have been so applied in discharge of a mortgage, the simple contract creditors may, in furtherance of the same principle, compel the heir to refund so much of the personal assets as have been applied to pay off the mortgage.⁵

§ 564 a. It was formerly doubted whether the same principle applied to the case of a vendor of an estate, whose unpaid purchase-money was, after the death of the purchaser, paid out of his personal estate. But it is now settled that, in such a case, the simple contract creditors of the purchaser shall stand in the place of the vendor, with respect to his lien on the estate so sold, against the devisee, as well as against the heir of the same estate. For the established rule being that simple contract creditors are, as against a devisee, to stand in the place of specialty creditors, who have exhausted the personal assets, because the specialty creditor had the two funds of real and personal estate to resort to ; by analogy, the simple contract creditors ought to be entitled to stand in the place of the vendor against the devisees, because the vendor

¹ *Sagittary v. Hyde*, 1 Vern. 455 ; *Lanoy v. Duke of Athol*, 2 Atk. 446 ; *Pollexfen v. Moore*, 3 Atk. 272 ; *Attorney General v. Tyndall*, Ambler, 615. See *Sproule v. Prior*, 8 Sim. 189.

² *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 389, 394, 395 ; *Trimmer v. Bayne*, 9 Ves. 210, 211.

³ *Westfaling v. Westfaling*, 3 Atk. 467 ; *Davies v. Topp*, 1 Bro. Ch. 526 ; *ante*, § 557.

⁴ *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 388, 395, 396 ; *Lutkins v. Leigh*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 53 ; *Wilson v. Fielding*, 2 Vern. 763 ; *Selby v. Selby*, 4 Russ. 336, 341.

⁵ *Wilson v. Fielding*, 2 Vern. 763.

has equally a charge upon the double fund of real and personal estate. Indeed, if the charge or lien of the vendor is to be considered in the same manner as if it were secured by mortgage, or in the nature of a mortgage (as it well may be), the principle above stated would clearly apply in favor of the simple contract creditors.¹

[* § 564 *b*. It has sometimes been made a question how far the mortgagee could go in, for a dividend upon his whole debt, in case of a deficiency of assets, without releasing his security. The rule in bankruptcy is, that the mortgagee can only prove his debt, for the deficiency, after deducting the amount of the mortgage security. And this rule has been sometimes enforced by courts of equity, in the settlement of estates.² But it has been questioned by high authority, in *Mason v. Bogg*,³ where Lord Cottenham, Chancellor, said: "If there were such a rule of equity as that which Sir John Leach propounds" [in *Greenwood v. Taylor*], "it would be found in some text-book or decided case. . . . With respect to the principle of that case, it is to be observed, that a mortgagee has a double security; he has a right to proceed against both, and to make the best he can of both." We believe the general practice, in the settlement of insolvent estates, is, to allow the creditor to prove his whole debt, without regard to any collateral security he may hold. If the dividend so reduces the debt that the collateral security will more than pay it, the personal representative is bound to redeem for the benefit of the general creditors.⁴

§ 564 *c*. And we apprehend the doctrine of marshalling assets is stated too broadly, when it is said that the mortgagee of two estates may be compelled to look exclusively to one, where another holds a mortgage upon the other only. Where the course of practice in foreclosure is to sell the estate, this is practically the result, provided the first estate will produce enough to pay the mortgage resting upon both. But where the practice is to foreclose the title

¹ *Selby v. Selby*, 4 Russ. 336, 340, 341; *Trimmer v. Bayne*, 9 Ves. 209. But see *Pollexfen v. Moore*, 3 Atk. 272, which is said in *Sproule v. Prior*, 8 Sim. 189, to be overruled. The same rule is now applied in favor of legatees. *Sproule v. Prior*, 8 Sim. 189.

² [* *Greenwood v. Taylor*, 1 Russ. & My. 185; *Bell v. Fleming*, 1 Beasley, 13.

³ 2 My. & Cr. 443, 446.

⁴ *Duncan v. Fish, Adm'r*, 1 Aiken, 231; *Walker, Smith, & Co. v. Barker*, 26 Vt. 710; *Putnam v. Russell*, 17 Vt. 54. But see *Amory v. Francis*, 16 Mass. 308.

of the mortgagor, the most which the subsequent mortgagee can claim is to redeem both estates, by the payment of the first debt, upon the failure of the mortgagor to redeem, and thus stand in the place of the first mortgagee.¹ But if the mortgagee release a portion of the land included in his mortgage, after he has either express or constructive notice of the existence of a subsequent mortgage, covering part of the estate, he thereby loses his security to the extent of the value of the portion released.² But a prior encumbrancer cannot be confined to one particular security, where it will prejudice him as to other liens upon the same.³ But where the first fund is susceptible of reduction to money, there is a duty upon the one holding security upon that and another fund, which a subsequent encumbrancer cannot reach, to first exhaust the fund upon which he alone has a lien.⁴]

§ 565. In general, legatees are entitled to the same equities where the personal estate is exhausted by specialty creditors; for they would otherwise be without any means of receiving the bounty of the testator.⁵ So they are permitted, in like manner, to stand in the place of the specialty creditors, against the real assets descended to the heir.⁶ So they are permitted, in like manner, to stand in the place of a mortgagee, who has exhausted the personal estate in paying this mortgage.⁷ And their equity will prevail, not only in case where the mortgaged premises have descended to the heir-at-law; but also where they have been devised to a devisee, who is to take, subject to the mortgage.⁸ But their equity

¹ *Post*, § 633, and notes.

² *Reiley v. Mayer*, Beasley, Ch. 55; *Lyman, Adm'r, v. Lyman*, 32 Vt. 79.

³ *Van Mater v. Ely*, Beasley, 271.

⁴ *Warren v. Warren*, 30 Vt. 530; *Lloyd v. Galbraith*, 32 Penn. St. 103.]

⁵ *Arnold v. Chapman*, 1 Ves. 110; *Mogg v. Hodges*, 2 Ves. 51; *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 396; *Lomas v. Wright*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 769, 775.

⁶ *Herne v. Meyrick*, 1 P. Will. 201, 202; *Culpepper v. Aston*, 2 Ch. Cas. 117; *Bowman v. Reeve*, Prec. Ch. 578; *Tipping v. Tipping*, 1 P. Will. 729, 730; *Clifton v. Burt*, 1 P. Will. 679, Cox's note; *Fenhoulhet v. Passavant*, 1 Dick. 253; *Pollexfen v. Moore*, 3 Atk. 272; *Wythe v. Henniker*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 645, 646; *Selby v. Selby*, 4 Russ. 336, 341; *Lomas v. Wright*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 769. But see *Young v. Hassard*, 1 Jones & L. R. 466; *Tombs v. Roch*, 2 Collyer, 490; *Gervis v. Gervis*, 14 Sim. 654.

⁷ *Lutkins v. Leigh*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 53; *Forrester v. Leigh*, Ambl. 171; *Selby v. Selby*, 4 Russ. 336, 341; *Sproule v. Prior*, 8 Sim. 189.

⁸ *Lutkins v. Leigh*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 53, 54; *Forrester v. Leigh*, Ambl. 171; *Norris v. Norris*, 2 Dick. 542; *Wythe v. Henniker*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 644; *Selby v. Selby*, 4 Russ. 336, 340, 341.

will not generally prevail against a devisee of the real estate not mortgaged, whether he be a specific or a residuary devisee; for he also takes by the bounty of the testator; and between persons, equally taking by the bounty of the testator, equity will not interfere, unless the testator has clearly shown some ground of preference or priority of the one over the other.¹ So that there is a distinction between the case where the estate is devised, and there are specialty creditors, and the case where it is devised, and there is a mortgage on it. In the latter case, the legatees stand in the place of the mortgagee, if he exhausts the personal assets; in the former case, they do not stand in the place of the specialty creditors. The reason assigned is, that a specialty debt is no lien on land in the hands of the obligor, or his heir or devisee. But a mortgage is a lien, and an estate in the land. By a devise of land mortgaged, nothing passes but the equity of redemption, if it is a mortgage in fee; if it is for years, the reversion and equity of redemption pass.²

§ 566. In like manner, where lands are subjected to the pay-

¹ *Clifton v. Burt*, 1 P. Will. 679, 680, and *Cox's* note; *Haslewood v. Pope*, 3 P. Will. 322, 324; *Scott v. Scott*, Ambl. 383; s. c. 1 Eden, 458; *Forrester v. Leigh*, Ambl. 171; *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 396, 397. Such preference or priority may be shown in various ways. Thus, if real estate is devised for, or subject to the payment of debts, if the personal estate is exhausted in payment of debts, the legatees will stand in the place of creditors on the real assets. 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 7, note (k); *Foster v. Cook*, 3 Bro. Ch. 347; *Haslewood v. Pope*, 3 P. Will. 323; *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 396, 397. Such preference or priority may also be rebutted by circumstances. Thus, it has been said that there is no rule, that, where real and personal estate is charged with the payment of debts, and the residue is given to a legatee or children, the court would, in such case, turn the charge on the real estate, to give the whole personal estate to the legatee. *Arnold v. Chapman*, 1 Ves. 110. See also *Wythe v. Henninger*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 635, 644, 645; *Lomas v. Wright*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 769. In this last case it was held, that creditors by specialty, who are mere volunteers, are not entitled to compete with creditors on simple contract for a valuable consideration. But, as against the devisees, they have a right to stand in the place of the mortgagees, who have exhausted the fund provided by the testator for the payment of debts.

² *Forrester v. Leigh*, Ambl. 171, 174. See also *Lutkins v. Leigh*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 53; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 7, and note (k); *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 396, 397. This distinction between the heir and the devisee makes it very important, in many cases, to ascertain whether, under a will, an heir takes by descent or by purchase. See *Herne v. Meyrick*, 1 P. Will. 201; *Scott v. Scott*, 1 Eden, 458; s. c. Ambl. 383; *Clifton v. Burt*, 1 P. Will. 678, 679, *Cox's* note (1).

ment of all debts, legatees are permitted to stand, in regard to such lands, in the place of simple contract creditors, who have come upon the personal estate, and exhausted it so far as to prevent a satisfaction of their legacies.¹ So, where legacies given by a will are charged on real estate, but legacies by a codicil are not; the former legatees will be compelled to resort to the real assets, if there is a deficiency of the personal assets to satisfy both.²

§ 566 *a*. Upon analogous grounds, if a specific legacy is pledged by the testator, the specific legatee is entitled to have his specific legacy redeemed; and if the executor fail to perform that duty, the specific legatee is entitled to compensation, to the amount of the legacy, out of the general assets of the testator. So, if a specific legacy is encumbered with a mortgage, or other charge, the specific legatee is entitled to have it paid off by the executor, out of the general assets of the testator; and, if that be not done, he is entitled to stand in the same situation as if the duty of the executor had been faithfully performed. Indeed, the same principle applies to specific legatees as to devisees, in respect to the redemption of the subject-matter of the gift out of the general assets of the testator.³

[* § 566 *b*. If there be a general gift of legacies in a will, followed by a gift of the "residue," or "rest," or "remainder," and especially where all these terms are used with reference both to real and personal estate, the legacies will be regarded as a charge upon the realty. And if the residuary devisee mortgage the real estate, the mortgagee will hold subject to the legacies.⁴

§ 566 *c*. So where legacies are directed to be paid out of the estate of the testator, the real estate is sufficiently charged.⁵ So, also, where the lands are devised to the executors, who are directed to pay the legacies.⁶]

§ 567. The doctrine adopted in all these cases, of allowing one creditor to stand in the place of another, having two funds to

¹ *Clifton v. Burt*, 1 P. Will. 678, 679, and *Cox's note*; *Haslewood v. Pope*, 3 P. Will. 323.

² *Hyde v. Hyde*, 3 Ch. 155; *Masters v. Masters*, 1 P. Will. 422; *Bligh v. Earl of Darnley*, 2 P. Will. 620; *Clifton v. Burt*, 1 P. Will. 679, *Cox's note*; *Norman v. Morrill*, 4 Ves. 769.

³ *Knight v. Davis*, 3 Mylne & K. 358, 361.

⁴ [* *Greville v. Browne*, 5 Jur. n. s. 849.

⁵ *Cox v. Corkendall*, 2 Beasley, 138.

⁶ *Ibid.*]

resort to, and electing to take satisfaction out of one, to which alone another creditor can resort, was probably transferred from the civil law into equity jurisprudence. It is certainly founded in principles of natural justice; and it early worked its way, under the title of substitution, into the civil law, where it was applied in a very large and liberal manner. But upon this subject we shall have occasion to speak hereafter in another place.¹

§ 568. There are other cases in which the marshalling of assets is in like manner enforced in courts of equity; as, for instance, in favor of the widow of a person deceased. After the death of the husband, his creditors cannot take his widow's necessary apparel in satisfaction of their debts.² With this exception, a widow's paraphernalia are generally subject to the payment of the debts of her husband.³ But, in favor of the widow, and to preserve her paraphernalia, courts of equity will interfere, by turning creditors, entitled to proceed against real assets or funds, over to these assets and funds for satisfaction. And if the paraphernalia have been actually taken by creditors in satisfaction of their debts, the widow will be allowed to stand in their place, and the assets will be marshalled so as to give her a compensation *pro tanto*.⁴

§ 569. In speaking of the marshalling of assets in cases of legacies, whether specific, or residuary (when the latter are entitled to the benefit), it must be understood, that the legacies are to private persons, taking for their own benefit; and not legacies for charity, either directly, or through the instrumentality of a trustee or legatee. In general, legacies of personal property to charitable uses are valid in point of law. But since the statute of 9th George II. ch. 36, in England, legacies or bequests by will to charitable uses, payable out of real estate, or charged on real estate, or to arise from the sale of real estate, are utterly void. And courts of equity, following out the intent and object of the statute, have refused to interfere in favor of legatees of personal property for charity, by marshalling assets for this purpose in any case what-

¹ See *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 412, 413, and *ante*, § 494, on the subject of contribution between sureties. *Post*, § 635, 636, 637.

² 2 Black. Comm. 436; *Noy's Maxims*, ch. 49; *Townshend v. Windham*, 2 Ves. 7.

³ *Ram on Assets*, ch. 10, § 1; 2 Black. Comm. 436; *Toller on Executors*, B. 3, ch. 8, p. 421, 422, 423.

⁴ *Ram on Assets*, ch. 18, p. 353, 354, and the cases there cited; *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 397; *Inclendon v. Northcote*, 3 Atk. 488.

ever; as, by throwing the debts or legacies on real assets for payment; or, by allowing the charity legatees to stand in the place of any creditor or legatee who has exhausted the personal estate, against the real assets.¹

§ 570. Hitherto we have been speaking of marshalling assets in favor of creditors, legatees, or widows. But it is not to be understood, that these are the only persons entitled to the benefit of this wholesome doctrine of courts of equity. Heirs-at-law and devisees are, in a great variety of cases, entitled to the protection [* resulting from the just application of this equitable remedy]. Thus, for instance, if an heir or devisee of real estate is sued by a bond creditor, he may, in many cases, be entitled to stand in the place of such specialty creditor against the personal estate of the deceased testator or intestate.²

§ 571. In order more fully to comprehend the nature and limitations of this doctrine, it is necessary to state, that, in the view of courts of equity, the personal estate of the deceased constitutes the primary and natural fund for the payment of his debts; and they will direct it to be applied in the first instance to that purpose, unless from the will of the deceased or from some other controlling equities, it is clear that it ought not to be so applied.³ But, in the order of satisfaction out of the personal estate of the deceased, if it is not sufficient for all purposes, creditors are preferred to legatees; specific legatees are preferred to the heir and devisee of the real estate, charged with specialties, or with the payment of debts;⁴ and specific legacies are liable to be applied in payment of specialty debts in priority to real estate devised;⁵ the devisee of

¹ Ram on Assets, ch. 18, § 3, p. 846 to 353; *Mogg v. Hodges*, 2 Ves. 52; *Attorney General v. Tyndall*, Ambl. 614; s. c. 2 Eden, 207; *Clifton v. Burt*, 1 P. Will. 670, Cox's note; *Ridges v. Morrison*, 1 Cox, 189; *Toller on Executors*, B. 3, ch. 8, p. 423; *Attorney General v. Winchelsea*, 3 Bro. Ch. 380, and Belt's note (3); *Attorney General v. Hurst*, 2 Cox, 364; *post*, 2 Eq. Jurisp. § 1180.

² *Mogg v. Hodges*, 2 Ves. 52; *Galton v. Hancock*, 2 Atk. 424, 425.

³ See Co. Litt. 208 b, Butler's note, 106.

⁴ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 3, 4, 5, and notes (e), (f), (g), (h); *Cope v. Cope*, 2 Salk. 449.

⁵ *Cornwall v. Cornwall*, 12 Sim. 298. [But see *Tombs v. Roch*, 2 Collyer, 490, where it was held that the amount necessary to complete the payment of the specialty debts must be contributed ratably by the specific legatees and devisees. See also *Gervis v. Gervis*, 14 Sim. 654, where *Cornwall v. Cornwall* was overruled.]

mortgaged premises is preferred to the heir-at-law of descended estates ;¹ and, *à fortiori* the devisee of premises not mortgaged is preferred to the heir-at-law.² In case unencumbered lands and mortgaged lands are both specifically devised, but expressly after the payment of all debts, they are to contribute proportionally in discharge of the mortgage.³ Where the equities of the legatees and devisees are equal, which (as we have seen) is sometimes the case, courts of equity remain neutral, and silently suffer the law to prevail.⁴ But, where the personal assets are sufficient to pay all the debts and legacies and other charges, there the heir or devisee, who has been compelled to pay any debt or encumbrance of his ancestor or testator, binding upon him, is entitled (unless there be some other equity, which repels the claim) to have the debt paid out of the personal assets, in preference to the residuary legatees or distributees. Thus, for instance, if a specialty debt or mortgage of an ancestor or testator is paid by the heir or devisee, he is entitled to have it paid out of the personal assets in the hands of the executor, unless the testator, by express words or other manifest intention, has clearly exempted the personal assets from the payment.⁵ And the personal assets are liable, in such cases of mortgage, even although there may not be any personal covenant for the payment of the debt or collateral bond.⁶ And

¹ Toller on Executors, B. 3, ch. 8, p. 418; *Howell v. Price*, 1 P. Will. 294, Mr. Cox's note; *Cope v. Cope*, 2 Salk. 449, Mr. Evans's note. Lord Hardwicke at first decided otherwise in *Galton v. Hancock*, 2 Atk. 424, but afterwards altered his opinion. *Id.* 2 Atk. 430.

² *Chaplin v. Chaplin*, 3 P. Will. 364; *Davies v. Topp*, 1 Bro. Ch. 524; *Manning v. Spooner*, 3 Ves. 114; *Livingston v. Newkirk*, 3 Johns. Ch. 319; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 3, 4, 5, and notes.

³ *Carter v. Barnardiston*, 2 P. Will. 505; 2 Bro. Par. Cas. 1; *Howell v. Price*, 1 P. Will. 294, Cox's note.

⁴ The whole subject was largely discussed in *Davies v. Topp*, 1 Bro. Ch. 524, Appx.; *Donne v. Lewis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 257; *Manning v. Spooner*, 3 Ves. 114; *Galton v. Hancock*, 2 Atk. 424, 430; *Harwood v. Oglander*, 8 Ves. 103, 124; *Milnes v. Slater*, 8 Ves. 294, 303; and in Mr. Cox's note to *Howell v. Price*, 1 P. Will. 294; and *Evelyn v. Evelyn*, 2 P. Will. 664; *Bootle v. Blundell*, 1 Meriv. 215 to 238; *Ram on Assets*, ch. 28, § 1 to 4, ch. 29, § 1 to 4. See the Reporter's note to *Phillips v. Parker*, 1 Tamlyn, 136, 143.

⁵ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 1, and note (a); 1 Md. Pr. Ch. 474, 475; Toller on Executors, B. 3, ch. 8, p. 418; *Howell v. Price*, 1 P. Will. 291, 294, and Cox's note (1); *Cope v. Cope*, 2 Salk. 446; *Ancaster v. Mayor*, 1 Bro. Ch. 454.

⁶ *Ante*, § 564, *et seq.*

lands, subject to, or devised for the payment of debts, are in like manner liable to discharge such mortgage in favor of the heir or devisee, to whom the mortgaged lands may belong.¹

§ 572. What shall constitute proof of such an intended exemption by the testator, is not, in many cases, ascertainable upon abstract principles; but must depend upon circumstances. It is certain, however, that a devise of all the testator's real estate, subject to the payment of his debts, or a devise of a particular estate, subject to the payment of debts, will not alone be sufficient to exempt the personal estate.² But, on the other hand, if the real estate be directed to be sold for the payment of debts, and the personal estate is expressly bequeathed to legatees, there the personal estate will, by necessary implication, be exempted.³

§ 573. The doctrine of the court, in all cases of this sort, is founded upon the same principle; that is, to follow out the intention of the testator. The personal estate is deemed the natural and primary fund for the payment of all debts; and the testator is presumed to act upon this legal doctrine, until he shows some other distinct and unequivocal intention. The general rule therefore, of courts of equity although sometimes delivered in one form, and sometimes in another, is (as Lord Hardwicke has expressed it) that the personal estate shall be first applied to the payment of debts, unless there be express words, or a plain intention of the testator to exempt his personal estate, or to give his personal estate as a *specific* legacy; for he may do this, as well as give the bulk of his real estate by way of specific legacy.⁴

§ 574. But, although the personal estate is thus decreed the general and primary fund for the payment of debts, and still re-

¹ *Bartholomew v. May*, 1 Atk. 487; *Tweedale v. Coventry*, 1 Bro. Ch. 240; *Howell v. Price*, 1 P. Will. 294, Cox's note; *Serle v. St. Eloy*, 2 P. Will. 386.

² *Ibid.*; *Bridgman v. Dove*, 3 Atk. 201, 202; *Haslewood v. Pope*, 3 P. Will. 325; *Inchiquin v. French*, Ambl. 33; s. c. 1 Cox, 1; 1 Wils. 82; 1 Bro. Ch. 458; *Lupton v. Lupton*, 2 Johns. Ch. 628; *Livingston v. Newkirk*, 3 Johns. Ch. 319; *Walker v. Jackson*, 2 Atk. 625; *Ancaster v. Mayor*, 1 Bro. Ch. 454; *Bootle v. Blundell*, 1 Meriv. 194, 210.

³ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 1, and note (a); *id.* § 3, and note (e), (a); *Wainwright v. Bendlowes*, 2 Vern. 718; s. c. Prec. Ch. 451; *Bamfield v. Wyndham*, Prec. Ch. 101; *Walker v. Jackson*, 2 Atk. 624, 625; *Gray v. Minnethorp*, 3 Ves. 103; *Bootle v. Blundell*, 1 Meriv. 194, 210, 224; *Milnes v. Slater*, 8 Ves. 293, 303.

⁴ *Walker v. Jackson*, 2 Atk. 625; *ante*, § 556.

mains so, notwithstanding the real estate is also collaterally chargeable; yet the rule is otherwise, or rather is differently applied, where the charge of the debt is principally and primarily upon the real estate, and the personal security of covenant is only collateral; for the primary fund ought in conscience, in all cases, to exonerate the auxiliary fund.¹ The debt or encumbrance may be in its nature real, or it may become so by the act of the person who has the power of charging both the real and the personal funds; or the land, although it be auxiliary only to the personal estate of the original contractor of the debt or encumbrance, may yet become the primary fund, as between itself and the personal estate of another person, who may take the land, either by descent or purchase, subject to the charge. In both these cases the personal estate is charged (if at all) only as a security for the land; and it ought to have the same measure of equity as the land is entitled to, when it is pledged as a security for a personal debt.²

§ 575. The first class of cases may be illustrated by the case of a jointure or portion, to be raised out of lands by the execution of a power. In such a case, notwithstanding there may be a personal covenant or agreement to raise the jointure or portion to the stipulated amount; yet the charge, when raised, is to be deemed a primary charge on the lands, and the personal estate of the covenantor only security therefor. In other words, although the covenantor is the original contractor, yet the charge, being in its nature real, and the covenant only an additional security, the land will be decreed to bear the burden, in exoneration of the personal estate.³ The same principle will apply to pecuniary portions, to be raised in favor of daughters, in a marriage settlement, out of lands placed in the hands of trustees for this purpose, although there be a personal covenant, also, of the settler to have the portion thus raised.⁴

¹ See *Co. Litt.* 208 *b*, *Butler's note*, 106; *Lechmere v. Charlton*, 15 *Ves.* 197, 198.

² See *Earl of Clarendon v. Barham*, 1 *Younge & Coll. N. R.* 688, 711, 712, where *Scott v. Beecher*, 5 *Mad.* 96, and *Lord Ilchester v. Carnarvon*, 1 *Beav.* 209, are remarked on. I borrow this language and the cases which illustrate it, from the valuable note of Mr. Cox to *Evelyn v. Evelyn*, 5 *P. Will.* 664, note (1). See also Mr. Cox's note to *Howell v. Price*, 1 *P. Will.* 294, note (1).

³ *Coventry v. Coventry*, 9 *Mod.* 13; *s. c.* 2 *P. Will.* 222; 2 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 3*, ch. 2, § 2, note (b).

⁴ *Edwards v. Freeman*, 2 *P. Will.* 435; *Evelyn v. Evelyn*, 2 *P. Will.* 664,

§ 576. The second class of cases may be illustrated by the common case of a mortgage created by an ancestor, and the mortgaged estate descending from his heir. There, although the heir should become personally bound to pay the mortgage, yet his personal estate would not be liable to be charged in favor of any person who should derive title by descent under him to the mortgaged premises, subject to the mortgage. For the debt was not originally contracted by him; and it was, as to him, primarily chargeable on the land; and even his covenant to pay the mortgage would only be considered as a security for the debt.¹ Therefore, where land

Mr. Cox's note (1); *Ward v. Dudley & Ward*, 2 Bro. Ch. 316; s. c. 1 Cox, 438; *Wilson v. Darlington*, 1 Cox, 172; *Duke of Ancaster v. Mayor*, 1 Bro. Ch. 454, 464, and Belt's note (2); *Bassett v. Percival*, 1 Cox, 268; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 2, note (b). See *Lechmere v. Charlton*, 15 Ves. 197, 198.

¹ *Cope v. Cope*, 2 Salk. 449; *Evelyn v. Evelyn*, 2 P. Will. 664, and Mr. Cox's note (1), and also his note (1) to *Howell v. Price*, 1 P. Will. 294; *Leman v. Newnham*, 1 Ves. 51; *Lacam v. Mertins*, 1 Ves. 312; *Ancaster v. Mayor*, 1 Bro. Ch. 454, 464, and Belt's note (2); *Lawson v. Hudson*, 1 Bro. Ch. 58, and Mr. Belt's note. *Earl of Clarendon v. Barham*, 1 Younge & Coll. N. R. 688, 711, 712. In this case Mr. Vice-Chancellor Bruce said: "I have, I think, only further to consider whether the Island estate, as it now stands, is the prior or the secondary fund for the payment of the Island mortgage debt. To the discharge of an ordinary debt due from Mr. Joseph Foster Barham, his personal estate ought, I apprehend, in the ordinary course, to be first applied. It has been contended, however, by the plaintiffs, that with regard to the sum secured on the Island estate, this cannot be, and that to the payment of that sum the Island estate must primarily be applied. The first reason assigned for this is, that there is evidence in the cause showing (as the plaintiffs insist) that, in point of fact, Mr. John Barham intended that, as between the personalty and the mortgaged realty liable to this debt, the latter should be the prior fund to be applied. I am unable, however, to discover any such evidence. It is true, that in my opinion there was an absence of intention on his part, that any part of the capital of his mother's fortune should be considered as either satisfied or extinguished. But this does not appear to me to amount to any thing for the present purpose. He could not as to the other persons interested in Lady Caroline's fortune, without their consent (a consent neither asked nor obtained, nor probably thought of), relieve any portion of his father's assets from the liability under which the whole of those assets was to make good that fortune; and I do not see any ground whatever for saying that he ever in fact indicated any wish or design, that any one part should wholly or partially indemnify any other part of the assets in respect of it. The other assigned reason is, that, independently of any proof of actual intention, the united characters of acting executor and sole residuary legatee, as well as heir and devisee of his father, having rendered Mr. John Barham solely and equally interested in the whole of the funds from which the fortune was due, it is a necessary consequence that the portion of those funds specifically

descended to the wife, subject to a mortgage made by her father, and on an assignment of the mortgage, the husband covenanted to pledged, though not exclusively liable for its payment, must bear the burden of the pledge without indemnity or contribution. The necessity of such a consequence is not obvious to my apprehension. The general rule is, that a pledge or security for a debt, though having its full operation in favor of the creditor, does not take away the character of debt, and neither excludes him from any other remedy, nor changes or affects the mode in which as between those who take the debtor's property, subject to his debts, that property is to be applied. Generally, with regard to such a question, the case is dealt with as if the pledge or security did not exist. I do not forget the distinctions or exceptions established or recognized in *Lutkins v. Leigh* (Cas. Temp. Talb. 53), *Halliwell v. Tanner* (1 Russ. & M. 633), *Wythe v. Henniker* (2 Myl. & C. 635), and the authorities to which reference is there made, distinctions or exceptions proving the rule, but otherwise seeming to me to have no place in the present case. If the mere fact of the union of interests were material, it would have had its operation and effect, though Mr. John Barham had died within an hour of his father's death ignorant of it. In that case there might have arisen, and as matters are there may arise, an absolute necessity for deciding which is the first fund for paying an unsecured specialty debt due from Mr. Joseph Foster Barham. Suppose such a creditor in existence; it would be contrary to all principle to hold that his caprice or election should decide between real estate now belonging to one person, and personal estate now belonging to another, which of the two is finally to bear the burden. The court must decide in such a case. And on what ground could it be held, that the personal estate ought not, as between that and the real estate, to be first applied? What could have taken place in the event that I have supposed, — what has, in fact, taken place to change the ordinary course as to such an unsecured debt? In my opinion, nothing. If so, in the absence of proof of actual intention, why should the mortgage or pledge make any difference? Yet, if the plaintiffs' contention is right, they would, in the event of the mortgagee's recovering, as it is admitted that they are entitled to recover their debt against the general personal estate of Joseph Foster Barham, be entitled to stand in the mortgagee's place against, or be indemnified by the real estate. The foundation of such a state of things in principle I am unable to see. Agreeing entirely with the doctrine laid down in *Bagot v. Oughton* (1 P. Will. 347), and *Evelyn v. Evelyn* (2 P. W. 659), which has been recognized in many other cases (particularly one in this family, *Barham v. Lord Thanet*, 3 M. & K. 607), I do not see any clear and irresistible reason for not holding that an executor, who, being also sole residuary legatee, has received more personal estate than enough to pay all the funeral and testamentary expenses, and debts and liabilities of every description, as well as legacies, becomes himself substantially debtor to the creditors of the testator. And whether such an executor is sole executor or survived by a co-executor, I apprehend that the doctrine of Lord Chief Baron Gilbert, *Lex Præc.* 315, equally applies in principle. The case also of Lord Belvidere *v. Rochfort* (5 Bro. P. C. 299), in the House of Lords (though I am aware of what Lord Thurlow has in *Tweddell v. Tweddell* (2 Bro. C. C. 101), and Lord Alvanley in *Woods v. Huntingford* (3 Ves. 130), said of that case, may be thought to

pay the money to the assignee ; it was decreed that the husband's personal estate should not exonerate the mortgaged premises ; for have at least a considerable bearing the same way and consequently against the plaintiffs. Lord Thurlow, who, as leading counsel, signed the case for the successful party, the respondent in *Lord Belvidere v. Rochfort*, appears to have considered that the House of Lords held, but ought not to have held, that the mortgage debt in question there had been made the debt of Robert Rochfort, the grandfather, as between his real and his personal estate ; and he is reported to have said, ' In that case George had a fee-simple in the estate ; he was capable of giving it after the charges were extinguished.' But I am not at all persuaded that he dissented from the doctrine to be found in *Gilbert*, and upon which doctrine the printed cases in *Lord Belvidere v. Rochfort*, and the statements of Lord Thurlow and Lord Alvanley, in *Tweddell v. Tweddell*, and *Woods v. Huntingford*, show, if not the certainty, at least a very high degree of probability, that in *Lord Belvidere's* case, both Lord Lifford and the House of Lords meant to act and did act independently of Lord Jocelyn's decree, and not by reason or in consequence of what Lord Jocelyn had done. Nor can I see that *Perkyns v. Bayntum* (2 P. Will. 564, n.), as to which I have examined the Registrar's book, is at variance with this doctrine. In *Perkyns v. Bayntum*, no account was sought of the personal estate of Sir William Osbaldistone, who had died a quarter of a century before the suit. What was its amount, whether it was considerable or inconsiderable, whether as to his personal estate in fact he died solvent or insolvent, was not stated, and does not appear. The point in *Gilbert* seems not to have been raised or touched in that case. Upon the whole, thinking the opinion of Lord Chief Baron Gilbert well founded in principle, and corroborated, if touched, by *Lord Belvidere's* case, I should, had the cases of *Scott v. Beecher* (5 Mad. 96), *Evans v. Smithson* (not reported), and *Lord Ilchester v. Lord Carnarvon* (1 Beav. 269), not existed, have held and decided that the personal estate of Joseph Foster Barham, and therefore in substance the personal estate of John Barham, is the first fund for the payment of the mortgage on the Island estate. Consistently, however, with the opinions which appear to have been expressed judicially by Sir John Leach, Lord Lyndhurst, and Lord Langdale, in these three cases, I apprehend that I cannot so decide. Feeling the respect due from me to these authorities, independently of Lord Lyndhurst's present position, deferring to them, and not upon this point acting in accordance with my own opinion, I direct the insertion in the decree of a declaration, that the Island estate is the first fund for the payment of the Island mortgage. The property which I have called the Island estate, subjected to this mortgage for 10,77*l.* 6*s.* 2*d.*, may possibly not be wholly real estate. It may include some personalty, — a remark which I do not mean as extending to the Island and compensation money, which, as I have said, I cannot hold to have been or to be ascribed, or applied, or applicable, otherwise than merely as part of the general mass of the general assets of Joseph Foster Barham, or general personal estate of John Barham, this being, as it seems to me, a consequence of the manner in which, and expressed title under which, he received it, and of his conduct in all respects. His father had nothing more than a life-interest in the benefit of the Island mortgage. Before concluding I may observe, that the reference which I have made

the debt was originally the father's; and the husband's covenant was only collateral security therefor.¹ So, where a mortgaged estate is purchased by an ancestor, subject to the mortgage, and of course so much less is paid for it, as the mortgage amounts to; there, upon a descent cast, if it be a fee, or upon devolution upon executors or legatees, if it be a leasehold estate, the personal estate of the purchaser will not be held bound to exonerate the mortgaged premises from the mortgage; for it is not the personal debt of the purchaser.²

§ 577. These illustrations may suffice to explain some of the more important doctrines of courts of equity upon this complicated subject of the marshalling of assets (for, in a work like the present, it is impossible to examine all of them minutely),³ and to show upon what nice presumptions and curious analogies they sometimes proceed, some of which (to say the least of them) are sufficiently artificial, and elaborate, and subtile. The manner in which assets are now generally marshalled in the payment of debts may be arranged in the following order. First, the general personal estate is applied to the payment of debts, unless exempted expressly, or by plain implication. Secondly, any estate particularly devised for the payment of debts, and only for that purpose. Thirdly, estates descended to the heir. Fourthly, estates specifically devised to particular devisees, although charged with the payment of debts.⁴

to *Evans v. Smithson* has been occasioned by my entire reliance upon the authenticity of the information from which Mr. Tinney's statement of that case was made, and my supposition that Lord Lyndhurst's view of the law as to a vendor's lien agreed with that of Sir W. Grant, in *Trimmer v. Bayne* (9 Ves. 209), and of Sir L. Shadwell in *Sproule v. Prior* (8 Sim. 189). It seems that the passage in *Gilbert* was brought under his lordship's notice, but not Lord Belvidere's case, and that neither was cited before Sir J. Leach or the present Master of the Rolls."

¹ *Ibid.*; *Bagot v. Oughton*, 1 P. Will. 347; See *Gooch v. Gooch*, 8 Eng. Law & Eq. 141.

² *Ancaster v. Mayor*, 1 Bro. Ch. 454, and Mr. Belt's note (2); *Tweddell v. Tweddell*, 2 Bro. Ch. 101, and Mr. Belt's note; *Butler v. Butler*, 5 Ves. 534, 538; *Cumberland v. Codrington*, 3 Johns. Ch. 229; Mr. Cox's note to *Howell v. Price*, 1 P. Will. 294, and his note to *Evelyn v. Evelyn*, 2 P. Will. 664; 2 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 3*, ch. 2, § 2, note (b); 4 *Kent, Comm. Lect. 65*, p. 420, 421 (4th edition).

³ See other cases, 2 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 3*, ch. 2, § 1, 2, 3, and notes; *Harwood v. Oglander*, 8 Ves. 106, 124; *Milnes v. Slater*, 8 Ves. 293, 303.

⁴ *Davies v. Topp*, 1 Bro. Ch. 526; *Donne v. Lewis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 263; *Harwood v. Oglander*, 8 Ves. 106, 124; *Milnes v. Slater*, 8 Ves. 293, 303; *Living-*

§ 578. This review of the jurisdiction of courts of equity over the administration of assets, however imperfect and brief, is quite sufficient to establish the truth of the remarks already stated, that the jurisdiction is not wholly and solely dependent upon the mere fact, that there exists a constructive trust of the funds in the hands of the personal representative, requiring them to be properly applied and distributed. But there are other and numerous sources of jurisdiction collaterally connected with it; such as the necessity of a discovery, and taking accounts, and cross equities by substitution and otherwise, existing in a great variety of cases, in very complicated forms, all of which are, or may be, necessary to be examined, in order to a full and due administration of the estate.¹ Indeed, the whole topic of marshalling assets seems properly to belong rather to the peculiar doctrines of courts of equity in regard to conflicting rights and equities, than to any notion of trust in the parties.

§ 579. Before quitting this subject, it may be useful to take notice of the interposition of courts of equity, in regard to the administration of assets, in cases where there is any alienation or waste of them on the part of the personal representative of the deceased. At common law, the executor or administrator is treated, for many purposes, as the owner of the assets, and has a power to dispose of and aliene them.² There is no such thing known as the assets in the hands of an executor being the debtor, or as a creditor's having a lien on them; but the person of the executor, in respect to the assets which he has in his hands, is treated as the debtor.³ At law, the assets of the testator may, perhaps, at least under special circumstances, be taken in execution for the personal debt of the executor, unless, indeed, there be some fraud or collusion between the execution creditor and the executor;⁴ as they cer-

ston v. Newkirk, 3 Johns. Ch. 319; 4 Kent, Comm. Lect. 65, p. 420, 421 (4th edit.); 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 474; Ram on Assets, ch. 30, p. 374; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 524, 537 to 543. ¹ Ante, § 542-543 a.

² Hill v. Simpson, 7 Ves. 166; McLeod v. Drummond, 14 Ves. 353; s. c. 17 Ves. 154, 168.

³ Farr v. Newnham, 4 T. R. 621, 634; Whale v. Booth, 4 T. R. 625, note; s. c. 4 Doug. 36; Nugent v. Gifford, 1 West, 496, 497; s. c. 1 Atk. 463; s. c. 2 Ves. 269. But see Hill v. Simpson, 7 Ves. 152; McLeod v. Drummond, 14 Ves. 361; s. c. 17 Ves. 154, 168.

⁴ Whale v. Booth, 4 T. R. 623, note; s. c. 4 Doug. 36; Farr v. Newnham, 4 T. R. 621; McLeod v. Drummond, 17 Ves. 154; Ray v. Ray, Cooper, 264.

tainly may also be taken in execution for the debts of the testator.¹ But in courts of equity, the assets are treated as the debtor, or, in other words, as a trust fund, to be administered by the executor for the benefit of all persons who are interested in it, whether they are creditors or legatees, or distributees, or otherwise interested, according to their relative priorities, privileges, and equities.²

[* § 579 *a*. The executor, being a creditor of the estate, thereby comes, to sustain, virtually, the double relation of debtor and creditor. Hence the legal remedy is suspended, and equity will compel the other creditors to allow the executor to retain the sum due him, upon an equitable distribution of assets, according to his order of priority; and will liquidate the claim, and determine all questions respecting it before the Master.³ The executor will be allowed to retain the amount of a debt barred by the statute of limitations.⁴]

§ 580. Still, however, courts of equity do not supersede the principles of law upon the same subject. And, therefore, a sale made *bond fide* by the executor, for a valuable consideration, even with notice of there being assets, will be held valid, so that they cannot be followed by creditors or others, into the hands of the purchaser.⁵ In this respect there is a manifest difference between the case of an ordinary trust, where notice takes away the protection of a *bond fide* purchase from the party, and this peculiar sort of trust, mixed up in some measure with general ownership.⁶ To affect a sale or other transaction of an executor, attempting to bind the assets, so as to let in the claim of creditors and others, who are principally interested, there must be some fraud, or collusion, or misconduct, between the parties.⁷ A mere secret intention of the executor to

¹ *Ibid.*; *contra*, *McLeod v. Drummond*, 17 Ves. 154, 168.

² *Farr v. Newnham*, 4 T. R. 636, per Buller, J.; *Whale v. Booth*, 4 T. R. 625, note; s. c. 4 Doug. 36.

³ [* *Adams v. Adams*, 22 Verm. 50.

⁴ *Hill v. Walker*, 4 Kay & Johnson, 166. The dictum of Bayley, J., in *McCulloch v. Dawes*, 9 Dow. & R. 43, that an executor by paying a debt barred by the statute of limitations makes himself liable to those interested in the estate, is here disapproved. But this, it would seem upon principle, must depend upon circumstances, to be judged of by the courts of equity. *Hill v. Walker*, *supra*.]

⁵ *Ibid.*; *McLeod v. Drummond*, 17 Ves. 154, 155, 168; *Keane v. Roberts*, 4 Mad. 357.

⁶ *Mead v. Lord Orrery*, 3 Atk. 238, 239, 240.

⁷ *Hill v. Simpson*, 7 Ves. 152; *Nugent v. Gifford*, 1 Atk. 463, cited 4 Bro. Ch. 136, and 17 Ves. 160, 163; *Andrews v. Wrigley*, 4 Bro. Ch. 125; *Mead v.*

misapply the funds, unknown to the other party dealing with him, or a subsequent unconnected misapplication of them, will not affect the purchaser. He must be conusant of such intention, and designedly aid or assist in its execution.¹ But, in the view of courts of equity, there is a broad distinction between cases of a sale or pledge of the testator's assets for a present advance, and cases of such a sale or pledge for an antecedent debt of the executor;² for, in the latter case, the parties must be generally understood to cooperate in a misapplication of the assets from their proper purpose, unless that inference is repelled by the circumstances.³

§ 581. The general doctrine now maintained by courts of equity, upon this subject, cannot be better summed up than it is by a learned judge (Sir John Leach) in an important case.⁴ "Every person" (said he) "who acquires personal assets by a breach of trust or a *devastavit* by the executor, is responsible to those who are entitled under the will, if he is a party to the breach of trust. Generally speaking, he does not become a party to the breach of trust by buying, or receiving as a pledge for money advanced to the executor at the time, any part of the personal assets, whether specifically given by the will or otherwise; because this sale or pledge is held to be *prima facie* consistent with the duties of an executor. Generally speaking, he does become a party to the breach of trust, by buying or receiving in pledge any part of the personal assets, not for money advanced at the time, but in satisfaction of his private debt; because this sale or pledge is *prima facie* inconsistent with the duty of an executor. I preface both of these propositions with the term 'generally speaking,' because they both seem to admit of exceptions." And it may be added, that, whenever there is a misapplication of the personal assets, and the

Lord Orrery, 3 Atk. 235, 238, 239; *McLeod v. Drummond*, 14 Ves. 355; 17 Ves. 154, 168, 169, 170, 171.

¹ *McLeod v. Drummond*, 14 Ves. 355; s. c. 17 Ves. 154, 158, 169, 170, 171; *Andrews v. Wrigley*, 4 Bro. Ch. 125; *Scott v. Tyler*, 2 Bro. Ch. 431; 2 Dick. 724; *Keane v. Roberts*, 4 Mad. 357.

² *McLeod v. Drummond*, 14 Ves. 361, 362; s. c. 17 Ves. 154, 155, 158 to 171; *Hill v. Simpson*, 7 Ves. 152.

³ *Ibid.* See also Mr. Roscoe's learned note to *Whale v. Booth*, 4 Doug. 47, note (66).

⁴ *Keane v. Roberts*, 4 Mad. 357, 358. See also *Ram on Assets*, ch. 37, § 4, p. 484; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 2, ch. 6, § 2, note (l); *Watkins v. Cheek*, 2 Sim. & Stu. 205.

assets or their proceeds can be traced into the hands of any persons affected with notice of such misapplication, there the trust will attach upon the property or proceeds in the hands of such persons, whatever may have been the extent of such misapplication or conversion.¹

§ 582. In cases where, during coverture, the assets of a feme covert executrix are wasted by the husband, and he then dies, no action at law lies by the creditors against the assets of the husband. But courts of equity will, in such a case, interfere, and relieve the creditors, upon the ground of the breach of trust in the husband, and his conversion of the assets of the wife's testator into funds in aid of his own assets.²

§ 583. And here we might treat of the nature and extent of the jurisdiction which courts of equity will exercise in regard to the assets of foreigners, collected under what is called an ancillary administration (because it is subordinate to the original administration), taken out in the country where the assets are locally situate. This subject, however, has been largely discussed in another place, in considering the conflict of the laws of different countries upon the subject of administrations of property situate therein, and,

¹ See *Ram on Assets*, ch. 37, § 4, p. 491, 492; *Adair v. Shaw*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 261, 262. The same principle may be further illustrated by the cases already mentioned, where creditors and others are permitted to sue the debtors of the deceased, when they collude with the executor or administrator, although they are not suable except by the executor or administrator. Lord Brougham, in *Holland v. Prior*, 7 Mylne & Keen, 240, said: "Although the general principle of the court, for preventing multiplicity of suits, and avoiding circuitry of proceeding, is to bring all the parties concerned in the subject-matter before it, and to adjudicate once for all among them; and, although this would lead, in administering the assets of deceased persons, to go beyond the personal representatives, following the estate of the deceased, and taking note of his credits, and consequently bringing forward his debtors; yet the practice of the court has prescribed bounds to the inquiry; and accordingly, the rule is, to stop short at the personal representatives, unless where there is insolvency, or where other parties stand in such relation to the deceased, or his estate, or his representative, that they may be said either to have been mixed with him and his affairs during his lifetime, or to have aided his representative after his decease, in withdrawing his estate from his creditors, or to have undertaken more directly, *quasi* representative of him." *Ante*, § 422 to 424; *Story on Eq. Pleadings*, § 178, 514; *Newland v. Champion*, 1 Ves. 106; *Doran v. Simpson*, 4 Ves. 651; *Alsager v. Rowley*, 6 Ves. 748; *Beckley v. Dorington*, West, 169; *White v. Parnter*, 1 Knapp, 179, 226; *Troughton v. Binkes*, 6 Ves. 572.

² *Adair v. Shaw*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 261, 262, 263.

therefore, it will be but very briefly taken notice of here.¹ In general, it may be said that, where a domestic executor or administrator collects assets of the deceased in a foreign country, without any letters of administration taken out, or any actual administration accounted for in such foreign country, and brings them home, they will be treated as personal assets of the deceased, to be administered here under the domestic administration.² But where such assets have been collected abroad, under a foreign administration, and such administration is still open, there seems much difficulty in holding, that the executor or administrator can be called upon to account for such assets under the domestic administration, unless, perhaps, under very peculiar circumstances; since it would constitute no just bar to proceedings under the foreign administration in the courts of the foreign country.³ And, indeed, probates of wills and letters of administration are not granted in any country in respect to assets generally, but only in respect to such assets as are within the jurisdiction of the country, by which the probate is established, or the administration granted.⁴

§ 584. Where there are different administrations⁵ granted in different countries, those which are in their nature ancillary are, as we have seen, generally held subordinate to the original administration. But each administration is deemed so far independent of the other, that property received under one cannot be sued for under another, although it may, at the moment, be locally situate within the jurisdiction of the latter. Thus, if property is received by a foreign executor or administrator abroad, and afterwards remitted here, an executor or administrator appointed here could not assert a claim to it here, either against the person in whose hands it might happen to be, or against the foreign executor or administrator. The only mode of reaching it, if necessary for the purposes of due administration here, would be to require its trans-

¹ See Story, *Comm. on Conflict of Laws*, ch. 13, § 492 to 530.

² *Dowdale's case*, 6 Co. 47, 48; s. c. Cro. Jac. 55; *Attorney General v. Diamond*, 1 Crompt. & Jervis, 370; *Erving's case*, 1 Crompt. & Jerv. 151; s. c. 1 Tyrw. 91.

³ See Story, *Comm. on Conflict of Laws*, ch. 13, § 512 to 519. But see *Attorney General v. Diamond*, 1 Crompt. & Jerv. 370; *Erving's case*, 1 Crompt. & Jerv. 151; 1 Tyrw. 191.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ This and the three following sections are taken almost verbatim from Story's *Conflict of Laws*, § 518, 524, 525, 528.

mission or distribution, after all claims against the foreign administration had been ascertained and settled abroad.¹

§ 585. In relation to the mode of administering assets by executors and administrators, there are in different countries very different regulations. The priority of debts, the order of payments, the marshalling of assets for this purpose, and, in cases of insolvency, the modes of proof, as well as of distribution, differ in different countries. In some countries, all debts stand in an equal rank; and in cases of insolvency, the creditors are to be paid *pari passu*. In others, there are certain classes of debts entitled to a priority of payment, and, therefore, deemed privileged debts. Thus, in England, bond debts and judgment debts possess this privilege; and the like law exists in some of the States of this Union. Similar provisions may be found in the law of France, in favor of particular classes of creditors. On the other hand, in Massachusetts, and in many other States of the Union, all debts, except those due to the government, possess an equal rank and are payable *pari passu*. Let us suppose, then, that a debtor dies domiciled in a country where such priority of right and privilege exists, and that he has assets situate in a State where all debts stand in an equal rank, and administration is duly taken out in the place of his domicile, and also in the place of the *situs* of the assets. What rule is to govern in the marshalling of the assets? The law of the domicile or the law of the *situs*? The established rule now is, that, in regard to creditors, the administration of the assets of deceased persons is to be governed altogether by the law of the country where the executor or administrator acts, and from which he derives his authority to collect them; and not by that of the domicile of the deceased. The rule has been laid down with great clearness and force on many occasions.²

§ 586. The ground upon which this doctrine has been established, seems entirely satisfactory. Every nation, having a right to dispose of all the property actually situate within it, has (as has often been said) a right to protect itself and its citizens against the inequalities of foreign laws, which are injurious to their interests. The rule of a preference, or of an equality, in the payment of debts, whether the one or the other course is adopted, is purely

¹ Story's Conflict of Laws, § 518.

² Story's Conflict of Laws, § 524. [* See also Tucker v. Condy, 10 Rich. Eq. 12.]

local in its nature, and can have no just claim to be admitted by any other nation which, in its domestic arrangements, pursues an opposite policy. And, in a conflict between our own and foreign laws, the doctrine avowed by Huberus is highly reasonable, that we should prefer our own. "In tali conflictu magis est ut jus nostrum, quam jus alienum, servemus."¹

§ 587. In the course of administrations, also, in different countries, questions often arise as to particular debts, whether they are properly and ultimately payable out of the personal estate, or whether they are chargeable upon the real estate of the deceased. In all such cases, the settled rule now is, that the law of the domicile of the deceased will govern in cases of intestacy; and, in cases of testacy, the intention of the testator. A case, illustrating this doctrine, occurred in England many years ago. A testator, who lived in Holland, and was seised of real estate there, and of considerable personal estate in England, devised all his real estate to one person, and all his personal estate to another, whom he made his executor. At the time of his death, he owed some debts by specialty, and some by simple contract, in Holland, and had no assets there to satisfy those debts; but his real estate was, by the laws of Holland, made liable for the payment of simple contract debts, as well as specialty debts, if there was not personal assets to answer the same. The creditors in Holland sued the devisee, and obtained a decree for the sale of the lands devised for the payment of their debts. And then, the devisee brought a suit in England against the executor (the legatee of the personalty) for reimbursement out of the personal estate. The court decided in his favor, upon the ground, that in Holland, as in England, the personal estate was the primary fund for the payment of debts, and should come in aid of the real estate, and be charged in the first place.²

§ 588. Every ancillary administration is, upon principles of international law, made subservient to the rights of creditors, legatees, and distributees, in the country where such administration is taken out, although the distribution, as to legatees and distributees or heirs, is governed by the law of the place of the testator or intestate's domicile. But a most important question often arises: What is to be done as to the residue of the assets, after discharging all the debts and other claims of the deceased, due to

¹ Story's Conflict of Laws, § 525.

² Ibid. § 528.

persons resident in the country where the ancillary administration is taken out? Is it to be remitted to forum of the testator's or intestate's domicile, to be there finally settled, adjusted, and distributed among all the claimants, according to the law of the country of the domicile of the testator or intestate? Or, may creditors, legatees, and distributees of any foreign country come into the courts of equity, or other courts of the country, granting such ancillary administration, and there have all their respective claims adjusted and satisfied, according to the law of the testator's or intestate's domicile, or to any other law? And in cases of insolvency, or other deficiency of assets, what rules are to govern in regard to the rights, preferences, and priorities of different classes of claimants under the laws of different countries, seeking such distribution of the residue?

§ 589. These are questions which have given rise to very ample discussions in various courts in the present age, and they have been thought to be not unattended with difficulty. It seems now, however, to be understood as the general result of the authorities, that courts of equity of the country where the ancillary administration is granted (and other courts, exercising a like jurisdiction in cases of administrations,) are not incompetent to act upon such matters, and to decree a final distribution of the assets to and among the various claimants, having equities or rights in the funds, whatever may be their domicile, whether it be that of the testator or intestate, or be in some other foreign country. The question, whether the court, entertaining the suit for such a purpose, ought to decree such a distribution, or to remit the property to the forum of the domicile of the party deceased, is treated, not so much as a matter of jurisdiction, as of judicial discretion, dependent upon the particular circumstances of each case. There can be, and ought to be, no universal rule on the subject. But every nation is bound to lend the aid of its own judicial tribunals, for the purpose of enforcing the rights of all persons, having a title to the fund, when such interference will not be productive of injustice, or inconvenience, or conflicting equities, which may call upon such tribunals for abstinence in the exercise of the jurisdiction.¹

¹ *Harvey v. Richards*, 1 Mason, 381; *Dawes v. Head*, 3 Pick. 128; *Story's Conflict of Laws*, ch. 13, § 513, and the cases in note (2), *ibid.* [* It has been held, in some cases, that courts of equity will not entertain a bill in aid of the

[* § 589 a. In a very late English case,¹ at the Rolls, where an insolvent in Australia became entitled to a fund in court, and then died, it was held, that if his domicile were Australian, the Australian assignees would be entitled to the fund; but if English, his legal personal representatives would be entitled to it. Held also that, assuming the domicile to be English, notwithstanding the comity of nations, the fund should be paid to the legal personal representatives, against whom the Australian assignees might take such steps as they should be advised.

§ 589 b. And in general the English courts of equity will restrain the representatives and legatees of an estate, where the testator died domiciled in England, from taking proceedings in a foreign court to administer the personalty; and they will not be allowed to take proceedings abroad, in regard to the administration of realty there located, if by so doing the administration of the personalty, in the domestic forum, will be embarrassed.²

§ 589 c. The courts of equity maintain bills to compel the refunding of legacies paid where there arises a deficiency in the general personalty for the payment of debts. And the courts of equity, in administration suits, will compel the residuary legatee to refund for the purpose of meeting unpaid legacies, even where the legatees are not parties to the suit, they having petitioned to come in before the master or chief clerk.³ But where the funds were paid to the residuary legatee, while there remained in the hands of the executor ample funds to meet all prior claims, but which were subsequently wasted, it was held no decree could be made against the residuary legatee. But if the goods had been wasted before the payment made to the residuary legatee, he will be compelled to refund, and in such cases the burden of proof is upon those who call upon the residuary legatee or next of kin to refund money paid to them, to show that the deficiency existed at the time the payment was made to them.⁴]

proceedings in a foreign tribunal. *Bent v. Young*, 9 Sim. 180. But this rule is departed from when it seems indispensable to restrain parties here from so dealing with the subject-matter of controversy as to defeat the jurisdiction of the foreign court, that court having the appropriate control of the matter in controversy. *The Transatlantic Company v. Pietroni*, 6 Jur. n. s. 532.

¹ *Re Blithman*, 12 Jur. n. s. 84; s. c. Law Rep. 2 Eq. 23.

² *Hope v. Carnegie*, 12 Jur. n. s. 284; s. c. Law Rep. 1 Ch. App. 320.

³ *Prowse v. Spurgin*, Law Rep. 5 Eq. 99.

⁴ *Peterson v. Peterson*, Law Rep. 3 Eq. 111.]

CHAPTER X.

LEGACIES.

[* § 590-592. Legacies not recoverable at common law.

§ 593. Grounds of equity jurisdiction.

§ 594. Not fully established until Lord Nottingham's time.

§ 595. Equity has exclusive jurisdiction where a trust is involved.

§ 596, 597. As where no disposition is made of personal estate, or in case of legacies.

§ 598, 599. As in case of married women, where security for support is required.

§ 600. So also in case of infants, to protect the fund.

§ 601. And where discovery for account is required.

§ 602. Or where legacies are charged on lands.

§ 603. May require the executor to give security, or pay money into court.

§ 604, 604 a. Security for legacies depending upon an intervening estate.

§ 606. *Donatio mortis causa* defined.

§ 606 a. Wherein it differs from a legacy and from a gift *inter vivos*.

§ 607. Derived from the civil law.

§ 607 a-607 d. What is the subject of such gifts.

§ 607 e, 608. Such gifts may be made subject to a trust.]

§ 590. ANOTHER head of concurrent jurisdiction in equity is in regard to LEGACIES. This subject has been, in part, incidentally treated before; but it is proper to bring the subject more fully under review. It seems that, originally, the jurisdiction over personal legacies was claimed and exercised in the temporal courts of common law; or, at least, that it was a jurisdiction *mixti fori*, claimed and exercised in the county court, where the bishop and sheriff sat together.¹ Afterwards (at least from the reign of Henry III.), the spiritual or ecclesiastical courts obtained exclusive jurisdiction over the probate of wills of personal property; and, as incident thereto, they acquired jurisdiction (though not exclusive) over legacies.² This latter jurisdiction still continues in the ecclesiastical courts; though it is at present rarely exercised; a more

¹ Swinb. on Wills, Pt. 6, § 11, p. 430, 431, 432; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 1, and notes (a) and (b); 2 Black. Comm. 491, 492; 3 Black. Comm. 61, 95, 96; *Marriott v. Marriott*, 1 Str. 667, 669, 670; 2 Roper on Legacies, by White, ch. 25, p. 685; 1 Reeves, Hist. of the Law, 92, 308.

² *Ibid.*; 3 Black. Comm. 98; Com. Dig. *Prohibition*, G. 17; Bac. Abridg. *Legacies*, M; *Atkins v. Hill*, Cowp. 287.

efficient and complete jurisdiction being, as we shall presently see exercised by courts of equity.¹

§ 591. In regard to legacies, whether pecuniary or specific, it is very clear, that no suit will lie at the common law to recover them, unless the executor has assented thereto.² If no such assent has been given, the remedy is exclusively in the ecclesiastical courts, or in the courts of equity. But in cases of specific legacies of goods and chattels, after the executor has assented thereto, the property vests immediately in the legatee, who may maintain an action at law for the recovery thereof.³ The same rule has been attempted to be applied at law to cases of pecuniary legacies, where the executor had *expressly* assented thereto; for it is agreed on all sides, that the mere possession of assets, without such assent, will not support an action.⁴ There are certainly decisions which establish, that in the case of an express promise to pay a pecuniary legacy in consideration of assets, an action will lie at law for the recovery thereof.⁵ But these cases seem not to have been decided upon satisfactory principles; and, though they have not been directly overturned in England, they have been doubted and disapproved by judges, as well as by elementary writers.⁶

§ 592. The ground upon which these decisions have been doubted or denied is, the pernicious consequences which would follow from allowing such an action at law; for courts of law, if compellable to entertain the jurisdiction, cannot impose any terms upon the parties. Thus, for instance, a suit might be maintained by a husband for a legacy given to his wife, without making any provision

¹ Bac. Abridg. *Legacies*, M; 2 Roper on Legacies, by White, ch. 25, § 2, p. 693; 5 Mad. 357.

² Deeks v. Strutt, 5 T. R. 690. [*Nor will an action lie in the common-law courts, to recover a distributive share in an estate, after the decree of the Probate Court, unless it be upon the administrator's bond. Howard & Wife v. Brown, 11 Vt. 361.]

³ Doe v. Gay, 3 East, 120; Paramore v. Yardley, Plowd. 539; Young v. Holmes, 1 Str. 70; 4 Co. 28 b.

⁴ Deeks v. Strutt, 5 T. R. 690; Doe v. Gay, 3 East, 120.

⁵ Atkins v. Hill, Cowp. 284; Hawkes v. Saunders, Cowp. 289.

⁶ See Deeks v. Strutt, 5 T. R. 690; Doe v. Gay, 3 East, 120; 2 Roper on Legacies, by White, ch. 25, § 2, p. 696, 697; Bac. Abridg. *Legacies*, M, Gwillim's note. See also 3 Dyer, 264 b; Beecker v. Beecker, 7 Johns. 99; Farish v. Wilson, Peake, 73; Mayor of Southampton v. Greaves, 8 T. R. 583; 2 Mad. Pr. Ch. 1, 2, 3.

for her, or for her family ; whereas, a court of equity would require such a provision to be made.¹

§ 593. But, whether a pecuniary legacy is recoverable at law or not, after an assent thereto by an executor, it is very certain, that courts of equity now exercise a concurrent jurisdiction with all other courts in cases of legacies, whether the executor has assented thereto or not.² The grounds of this jurisdiction are various. In the first place, the executor is treated as a trustee for the benefit of the legatees ; and, therefore, as a matter of trust, legacies are within the cognizance of courts of equity, whether the executor has assented thereto or not. This seems a universal ground for the jurisdiction.³ In the next place, the jurisdiction is maintainable in all cases where an account or discovery, or distribution of the assets is sought, upon general principles. Indeed, Lord Mansfield seems to have thought that the jurisdiction arose as an incident to discovery and account.⁴ In the next place, there is, in many cases, the want of any adequate or complete remedy in any other court.⁵

§ 594. Obvious as some of these grounds are to found a general jurisdiction in equity in cases of legacies, it does not appear that the jurisdiction was familiarly exercised until a comparatively recent period. Lord Kenyon indeed has said, the jurisdiction over questions of legacies was not exercised in equity until the time of Lord-Chancellor Nottingham.⁶ In this remark, Lord Kenyon was probably under some slight mistake ; for traces are found of an exercise of the jurisdiction, as early as the time of Lord-Chancellor Ellesmere, in cases where the defendant answered the bill, and took no exceptions ; although he appears to have entertained the opinion that the ecclesiastical courts were more proper to give

¹ *Deeks v. Strutt*, 5 T. R. 692. An action at law for a pecuniary legacy has been maintained against an executor after his assent to the legacy, in some of the courts of America. In some of the States, an action at law is expressly given by statute. See *Dewitt v. Schoonmaker*, 2 Johns. 243 ; *Beecker v. Beecker*, 7 Johns. 99 ; *Farwell v. Jacobs*, 4 Mass. 634 ; *Bigelow's Digest, Legacy, C.*

² *Franco v. Alvares*, 3 Atk. 346.

³ 2 *Roper on Legacies* by White, ch. 25, p. 685 ; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisp. B.* 1, ch. 1, § 2, p. 104 ; *Farrington v. Knightly*, 1 P. Will. 549, 554 ; *Wind v. Jekyl*, 1 P. Will. 575 ; *Hurst v. Beach*, 5 Mad. 360 ; 2 Mad. Pr. Ch. 1, 2.

⁴ *Atkins v. Hill*, Cowper, 287 ; 2 Mad. Pr. Ch. 1, 2.

⁵ 2 Mad. Pr. Ch. 1, 2, 3 ; *Franco v. Alvares*, 3 Atk. 346.

⁶ *Deeks v. Strutt*, 5 T. R. 692.

relief in cases of legacies.¹ But it is highly probable that the jurisdiction was not firmly established beyond controversy until Lord Nottingham's time.

§ 595. Indeed, in many cases, courts of equity exercise an exclusive jurisdiction in regard to legacies; as, for instance, where the bequest of the legacy involves the execution of trusts, either express or implied; or where the trusts, ingrafted on the bequest, are themselves to be pointed out by the court; for (as we have seen), the spiritual courts cannot, any more than the temporal common-law courts, enforce the execution of trusts.²

§ 596. It is upon this account, that where a testator, by his will, has not disposed of the surplus of his personal estate, the spiritual courts have no authority to decree distribution of it; for in such a case, the executor is at law entitled to it; although, under circumstances, he may in equity be held to be a trustee for the next of kin.³ And therefore it is, that if the spiritual courts

¹ 2 Mad. Pr. Ch. 1, 2.

² 2 Roper on Legacies, by White, ch. 25, § 2, p. 693; *Farrington v. Knightly*, 1 P. Will. 549; *Anon.*, 1 Atk. 491; *Hill v. Turner*, 1 Atk. 516; *Attorney General v. Pyle*, 1 Atk. 435.

³ 2 Mad. Pr. Ch. 1, 2, 3; *Farrington v. Knightly*, 1 P. Will. 549, 550, 553, 554, and Mr. Cox's note (1); *id.* 550; *Petit v. Smith*, 1 P. Will. 7; *Hatton v. Hatton*, 2 Str. 865; *ante*, § 536, 537. At law, the appointment of an executor is deemed to be a virtual gift to him of all the surplus of the personal estate, after the payment of all debts and legacies. But in equity he is considered a mere trustee of such surplus, for the benefit of the next of kin, if, from the nature and circumstances of the will, a presumption arises that the testator did not intend that the executor should take such surplus to his own use. The effect of the doctrine, therefore, is, that the legal right of the executor will prevail, unless there are circumstances which repel that conclusion. *Wilson v. Ivat*, 2 Ves. 165; *Bennett v. Bachelor*, 1 Ves. Jr. 67; *Dawson v. Clarke*, 18 Ves. 254; *Haynes v. Littlefear*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 496. What circumstances will be sufficient to turn the legal estate of the executor into a trust is a matter which would require a very large discussion, in order to bring before the reader all the appropriate learning. It is, in truth, rather a matter of presumptive evidence than of equity jurisdiction. The subject is amply treated in *Jeremy on Equity Jurisp. B. 1, ch. 1, § 2, p. 122 to 135*; and in 2 Roper on Legacies, by White, ch. 24, p. 579; *id.* 590 to 640. It may, however, be generally stated, that where there arises upon the face of the will a presumption that the executor is not to take the surplus for his own use, there parol evidence may be admitted, on his part, to repel the presumption; or, on the part of the next of kin, to confirm it. But if no such presumption arises on the face of the will, parol evidence is not admissible, on the part of the next of kin, to show that the executor was not intended to take beneficially. *Ibid.*; 1 Roper on Legacies, by White, ch. 6, § 2, p. 337,

attempt to enforce the payment of a legacy, which involves a trust, a court of equity will award an injunction in order to protect its own exclusive jurisdiction.¹

§ 597. So, where the jurisdiction in the spiritual courts cannot be exercised in a manner adequate to protect the just rights of all the parties concerned in the case of a legacy, courts of equity will assume an exclusive jurisdiction, and grant an injunction to stay proceedings of the spiritual courts for such legacy. It was upon this account that injunctions were formerly granted by courts of equity to proceedings in the spiritual courts for a legacy, where there was no offer or requirement of security to refund it (which such courts might insist on or not),² in case of a deficiency of assets. For, it was said, that there is a difference between a suit for a legacy in a court of equity, and a suit for a legacy in the spiritual courts. If, in the spiritual courts, they would compel an executor to pay a legacy without security to refund, there a prohibition should go. But, in a court of equity, though there be no provision made for refunding (which was formerly a usual provision, but is now discontinued), yet the common justice of the court would compel a legatee to refund.³

§ 598. But there are other instances illustrative of the same principle of exclusive jurisdiction, of a more general character, and dependent upon the state of the legatee. Thus, if a legacy is given to a married woman, and her husband sues therefor in the Spiritual Court, a court of equity will grant an injunction; for the Spiritual Court has no authority (as we have seen) to require him to make a suitable settlement on her and her family, as a

338; *White v. Williams*, 3 Ves. & B. 72, 73; *Langham v. Sandford*, 2 Meriv. 17, 18; *Hurst v. Beach*, 5 Mad. 360.

¹ Roper on Legacies, by White, ch. 25, § 2, p. 693; Anon., 1 Atk. 591.

² *Nicholas v. Nicholas*, Prec. Ch. 546, 547; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 2; *Horrell v. Waldron*, 1 Vern. 26, 27; Mr. Cox's note B. to *Slanning v. Style*, 3 P. Will. 337.

³ *Noel v. Robinson*, 1 Vern. 93, 94; Anon., 1 Atk. 491; *Hawkins v. Day*, Ambler, 161, 162; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 2, note (d). In Anon., 1 Atk. 491, Lord Hardwicke said, that the rule of the court was varied since the case in 1 Vern. 93; for legatees are not obliged to give security to refund upon a deficiency of assets. See *ante*, § 537, 538. In *Hawkins v. Day*, Ambler, 162, Lord Hardwicke said: "The rule of this court to grant prohibitions, in case legatees sue in the Spiritual Court, and refuse to give security, is out of use now. But this court will decree a legatee to refund."

court of equity has; and, therefore, to allow the suit in the Spiritual Court to proceed, would enable the husband to do injustice to her rights, and to defeat her equity to a settlement.¹

§ 599. In general, it is true, that, in cases of concurrent jurisdiction (as of legacies), that court, which is first in possession of the cause, is entitled to go on with it; and no other court ought to intermeddle with it. But this rule is applicable only to cases where the same remedial justice can be administered in each court, and the same protection furnished by each to the rights of the parties.² In cases of married women, it is obvious from what has been above stated, that the same remedial justice cannot be administered in each court; and, therefore, courts of equity will insist upon making it exclusive.

§ 600. In like manner, in the case of infants, to whom legacies are given, courts of equity will interfere, and exercise an exclusive jurisdiction, and prevent proceedings in the Spiritual Court by an injunction; for courts of equity can give proper directions for securing and improving the fund, which the Spiritual Court cannot do. And, indeed, it would be proper for the executor to resort to a court of equity in order to procure suitable indemnity for the payment of the legacy, and security to refund in case of a deficiency of assets.³

§ 601. In cases where a discovery of assets is required, or the due administration and settlement of the estate is indispensable to the rights of the legatees, as in the case of residuary legatees, it follows, of course, that courts of equity should entertain the exclusive jurisdiction, since they alone are competent to such an investigation. But this subject has been already sufficiently examined under the preceding head of the jurisdiction of courts of equity in cases of administrations.⁴

§ 602. In regard to legacies charged on land, courts of equity, for the reasons already stated, also exercise an exclusive jurisdiction, for the spiritual courts have no cognizance of legacies charge-

¹ *Meals v. Meals*, 1 Dick. 373; *Anon.*, 1 Atk. 491; *Hill v. Turner*, 1 Atk. 516; *Jewson v. Moulson*, 2 Atk. 419, 420; *Prec. Ch.* 548; 2 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 2, note (d); 2 *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 2; *ante*, § 539, 592.

² *Nicholas v. Nicholas*, *Prec. Ch.* 546, 547.

³ *Horrell v. Waldron*, 1 *Vern.* 26; *Nicholas v. Nicholas*, *Prec. Ch.* 546, 547; 2 *Roper on Legacies*, by White, ch. 25, § 2, p. 694; *ante*, § 539, 597.

⁴ *Ante*, § 534.

able on lands, but only of purely personal legacies.¹ In deciding upon the validity and interpretation of purely personal legacies, courts of equity implicitly follow the rules of the civil law, as recognized and acted on in the spiritual courts.² But in legacies chargeable on land, they follow the rules of the common law, as to the validity and interpretation thereof.³

§ 603. But the beneficial operations of the jurisdiction of courts of equity, in cases of legacies, is even more apparent in some other cases, where the remedies are peculiar to such courts, and are protective of the rights and interests of legatees. Thus, for instance in cases of pecuniary legacies, due and payable at a future day (whether contingent or otherwise),⁴ courts of equity will compel the executor to give security for the due payment thereof;⁵ or, what is the modern and perhaps, generally, the more approved practice will order the fund to be paid into court, even if there be not any actual waste, or danger of waste, of the estate.⁶

¹ *Reynish v. Martin*, 3 Atk. 333.

² *Ibid.*; *Franco v. Alvares*, 3 Atk. 346; *Hurst v. Beach*, 5 Mad. 360; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 4, and note (*h*). But see *Cray v. Willis*, 2 P. Will. 530.

³ *Reynish v. Martin*, 3 Atk. 333, 334; *Paschall v. Keterich*, *Dyer*, 151 (*b*), (5). But see *Dyer*, 264 *b*.

⁴ Formerly, a distinction was taken between cases of contingent and cases of absolute legacies, payable in futuro; the latter were entitled to be made secure in equity; the former were not. See *Palmer v. Mason*, 1 Atk. 505; *Heath v. Perry*, 3 Atk. 101, 105. But that distinction is now overruled. See Mr. Saunders's note to *Heath v. Perry*, 3 Atk. 105, note (1); Mr. Blunt's note to *Ferrand v. Prentice*, *Ambler*, 273, note (1); *Johnson v. De la Creuze*, cited 1 Bro. Ch. 105; *Green v. Pigott*, 1 Bro. Ch. 103, 105; *Flight v. Cook*, 2 Ves. 619; *Gawler v. Standerwick*, 2 Cox, 15, 18; *Carey v. Askew*, 2 Bro. Ch. 55; *Jeremy on Equity Jurisd. B. 3, ch. 2, § 2, p. 351, 352*; *Studholme v. Hodgson*, 3 P. Will. 300, 303, 304; *Johnson v. Mills*, 1 Ves. 282, 283; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 180, 181; *post*, § 844, 848.

⁵ 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 2, note (*d*); *Rous v. Noble*, 2 Vern. 249; s. c. 1 Eq. Abridg. 238, Pl. 22; *Duncumban v. Stint*, 1 Ch. Cas. 121.

⁶ *Johnson v. Mills*, 1 Ves. 282; *Ferrand v. Prentice*, *Ambler*, 273; s. c. 2 Dick. 569; *Phipps v. Annesley*, 2 Atk. 58; *Green v. Pigott*, 1 Bro. Ch. 104; *Webber v. Webber*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 311; *Johnson v. De la Creuze*, 1 Bro. Ch. 105; *Strange v. Harris*, 3 Bro. Ch. 365; *Yare v. Harrison*, 2 Cox, 377; *Slanning v. Style*, 3 P. Will. 336; *Batten v. Earnley*, 2 P. Will. 163; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, ch. 2, § 2, p. 351, 352*; *Blake v. Blake*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 26. In *Slanning v. Style*, 3 P. Will. 336, it was said by Lord Talbot: "Generally speaking, where the testator thinks fit to repose a trust, in such a case, until some breach of that trust be shown, or at least a tendency thereto, the court

§ 604. Another class of cases of the same nature is, where a specific legacy is given to one for life, and after his death to another; there the legatee in remainder was formally entitled, in all cases, to come into a court of equity, and to have a decree for security from the tenant for life, for the due delivery over of the legacy to the remainder-man. But the modern rule is, not to entertain such a bill, unless there be some allegation and proof of waste; or of danger of waste of the property. Without such ingredients, the remainder-man is only entitled to have an inventory of the property bequeathed to him, so that he may be enabled to identify it; and, when his absolute right accrues, to enforce a due delivery of it.¹

will continue to intrust the same hand without calling for any other security than what the testator has required." Yet in that very case, where an annuity was charged on the residue of the personal estate of the testator, he ordered assets, to the amount necessary to secure it, to be brought into court. But where there is any danger of loss or deterioration of the fund, courts of equity, in all cases, used to require security. *Rous v. Noble*, 2 Vern. 249; s. c. 1 Eq. Abridg. 238, Pl. 22. But the modern practice seems to be (as stated in the text) to have the money paid into court; though it is certainly competent for the court to adopt either course.

¹ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 178, 179; *Bracken v. Bentley*, 1 Ch. 110; *Anon.*, 2 Freem. 206; *Foley v. Burnell*, 1 Bro. Ch. 279; *Slanning v. Style*, 3 P. Will. 335, 336; *Hyde v. Parrat*, 1 P. Will. 1; *Batten v. Earnley*, 2 P. Will. 163; *Leeke v. Bennett*, 1 Atk. 471; *Bill v. Kinaston*, 2 Atk. 82; *Henderson v. Vaulx*, 10 Yerger, 30; *Covenhoven v. Shuler*, 2 Paige, 122, 132. This last case involved the question, what was to be done, in case of a bill bequeathing to a wife the one-third of the residue of the personal estate of the testator, and also the use of the residue during her widowhood; and it was held by Mr. Chancellor Walworth that the widow was bound to account for the whole personal estate; and, that the two-thirds of the residue of the personal estate, which was bequeathed over after the death of the wife, ought to be invested in permanent securities, and the income thereof paid to the wife during her widowhood; and, after her death or marriage, to the legatees in remainder. The learned Chancellor, on that occasion, said: "The modern practice in such cases is, only to require an inventory of the articles, specifying that they belong to the first taker, for the particular period only, and afterwards to the person in remainder; and security is not required, unless there is danger that the articles may be wasted, or otherwise lost to the remainder-man. *Foley v. Burnell*, 1 Bro. Ch. Cas. 279; *Slanning v. Style*, 3 P. Will. 336. Whether a gift for life, of specific articles, as of hay, grain, &c., which must necessarily be consumed in the using, is to be considered an absolute gift of the property, or whether they must be sold, and the interest or income only of the money applied to the use of the tenant for life, appears to be a question still unsettled in England. 3 Ves. 314; 3 Mer. 194. But none of these principles, in relation to specific bequests of particular articles, whether capable of a separate

[* § 604 *a*. The question how far a legacy, depending upon intervening estates in the same property, is to be regarded as vested, and when it is to be treated as a mere expectancy, or contingent interest, is one of frequent occurrence in the courts of equity, and one not free from difficulty.¹ A marked distinction obtains between

use for life, or otherwise, are applicable to this case. Where there is a general bequest of a residue for life, with a remainder over, although it includes articles of both descriptions, as well as other property, the whole must be sold and converted into money by the executor, and the proceeds must be invested in permanent securities, and the interest or income only is to be paid to the legatee for life. This distinction is recognized by the Master of the Rolls, in *Randall v. Russell*, 3 Mer. 193. He says, if such articles are included in a residuary bequest for life, then they are to be sold, and the interest enjoyed by the tenant for life. This is also recognized by Roper and Preston, as a settled principle of law in England. *Prest. on Leg.* 96; *Roper on Leg.* 209. See also *Howe v. Earl of Dartmouth*, 7 Ves. 137, and cases in the notes; [*Mills v. Mills*, 7 Sim. 501; *Fryer v. Butler*, 8 Sim. 442; *Benn v. Dixon*, 10 Sim. 636; *Cope v. Bent*, 5 Hare, 36; *Hunt v. Scott*, 1 De Gex & Sm. 212; *Horne v. Horne*, 14 Jurist, 359; *Neville v. Fortescue*, 16 Sim. 333; *Morgan v. Morgan*, 7 Eng. Law & Eq. 216. But a gift of the interest of £1,000 has been lately held a bequest of the absolute property. *Humphrey v. Humphrey*, 6 Eng. Law & Eq. 113.] The case of *Dewitt v. Schoonmaker* (2 Johns. 243) seems to be in collision with this principle. But Mr. Justice Tompkins, who delivered the opinion of the court there, does not appear to have noticed the distinction between the bequest of a general residue and the bequest of specific articles. He says, however, it was the duty of the executors, on the death of the widow, to have paid and delivered the personal estate to the residuary legatee. If such was their duty, they were not bound to deliver the principal of the estate into her hands, without requiring security that it should be preserved and paid over to the residuary legatee after her death. That case was correctly decided; for it was manifestly the intention of the testator, that the property should be delivered over to the son after the death of the widow, and that he should pay the legacy to his sister. This court presumed he had received the property agreeably to the directions of the will, and the executors were held not to be liable to the legatee in a court of law. In the case before me, the widow was not entitled to the use or possession of any specific article of the personal estate; but only to one-third of the principal, and the interest or income of two-thirds of the remainder of the general residue, after the debts of the testator and the legacy to Mrs. Cady were paid or satisfied. The complainants are, therefore, entitled to an account of all the personal estate of the testator in value, as it existed at the death of their father; and, after deducting the legacy to Mrs. Cady, and the funeral charges and the expenses of administration, their share of the balance must be invested in permanent securities, and the income thereof paid to Lena Shuler during her life or widowhood; and the principal, after her death or marriage, must go to the complainants."

¹ [* *Smith v. Colman*, 25 Beavan, 216; *Edwards v. Edwards*, 15 Beavan, 357; *Home v. Pillans*, 2 My. & K. 15. The subject is very elaborately considered in the two last cases, and most of the cases upon the question reviewed.

a legacy to one for life, and then to such of the children of the *cestui que vie* as shall attain a certain age; and a gift over to the children generally. In the former case, the class is to be determined only when the contingency happens; and in the latter it must be determined at the death of the testator, from which date the will speaks. And all the children then living take a vested interest, not liable to be defeated, even by the death of the child, during the continuance of the intervening estate.¹ And where the actual division is postponed till the termination of the life-estate, for the convenience of the estate, and not to determine who shall be entitled; it does not hinder the estate, given over, from vesting in those entitled, at the death of the testator.² The case of *Beck v. Burn*,³ which seems to hold a contrary rule, is here doubted, or denied to be law. But it has been held that, where a sum of money is given, to be divided among a class, when the eldest attains twenty-one, whether the gift be vested or contingent, all the children who are born before the period of division are entitled to shares.⁴ The construction is generally in favor of vesting.⁵ It is held, also, that if a bequest be made to one, or his heirs, and he die before the testator, the legacy will not lapse, but go to the heir.⁶

¹ *Adams v. Robarts*, 25 Beavan, 658. In the case of *Remnant v. Hood*, 6 Jur. n. s. 1173, it was held by the Court of Appeal, affirming the decision of the Master of the Rolls, that the general rule, where legacies or portions are charged on real estate, and payable at a future time, is, that they do not vest until the time appointed for payment; but a portion for younger children, so secured, may be held to vest when the child comes of age, although he die before the settler. See *White v. Baker*, 6 Jur. n. s. 591. It is here said, that the case of *Seurfield v. Howes*, 3 Br. C. C. 90, is not at variance with the other authorities, as suggested. 1 *Jarman on Wills*, 704. See *Pinder v. Pinder*, 6 Jur. n. s. 489; *Chalmers v. North*, id. 490; *Lees v. Massey*, id. 2. The general rule is, that, when a fund is given to a class, all who answer the description when it is to be paid are entitled to participate in it. *Hawkins v. Everett*, 5 Jones, Eq. 42; *Simpson v. Spence*, id. 208. But see *Faubault v. Taylor*, id. 219; *Gay v. Baker*, id. 344; *Whitehead v. Lassiter*, 4 id. 79; *Wessinger v. Hunt*, 9 Rich. Eq. 459.

² *Leering v. Sherratt*, 2 Hare, 14; *Leake v. Robinson*, 2 Meriv. 363; *Packham v. Gregory*, 4 Hare, 396; *Neatherway v. Fry, Kay*, 172; *Hearn v. Baker*, 2 K. & J. 383.

³ 7 Beavan, 492.

⁴ *Mann v. Thompson, Kay*, 638.

⁵ *Day v. Day, Kay*, 703. But see, upon this subject, *Lloyd v. Lloyd*, 3 Kay & J. 20; *Gilman v. Daunt*, id. 48; *Bennett's Will*, 3 Kay & J. 280; *Wharton v. Barker*, 4 Kay & J. 483; *Madison v. Chapman*, id. 709; *Devane v. Larkins*, 3 Jones, Eq. 377.

⁶ *Porter's Trust, in re*, 4 Kay & J. 188; *Wildman's Trust, in re*, 7 Jur. n. s. 121.

But if it be to one, or his personal representative, the legacy will lapse, if he die before the testator. A gift over is allowed to operate notwithstanding the intervening estate may fail, for a reason not named in the will, or probably in the contemplation of the testator.¹ The subject is discussed in an important case² before the House of Lords, upon appeal from the Lord Chancellor,³ and the Vice Chancellor,⁴ and the gift over held operative as to real estate, but that the personalty vested absolutely in the first donee, he being of the age named, for his interest to take effect, at the decease of the testator, and the gift over, being of the "residue," after the decease of the first donee, without heirs. The rule in Wild's case, 6 Rep. 17, as to what words create an estate-tail in realty, is not applicable to personalty. In general, words which as to realty will create an estate-tail, will give an absolute estate in personalty.⁵ Where the testator gave the remainder of his estate to his nephews and nieces, but provided that in case of the death of any of them before receiving his or her share, that the same should be paid to the survivors, it was held that those living at the death of the testator took vested interests, subject to be divested by decease before the time of payment, which, in case of legacies, is one year from the death of testator.⁶

§ 605. This may suffice, in this place, on the subject of the peculiar jurisdiction of courts of equity in cases of legacies, when the relief sought and given is of a precautionary and protective nature. The subject will again come under review in the consideration of bills *quia timet*.⁷

¹ Warren v. Rudall, 4 Kay & J. 603. The cases upon the subject, and especially, Attorney General v. Hodgson, 15 Simons, 146, and Melpott v. St. George's Hospital, 21 Beavan, 134, are thoroughly reviewed. See also Corbett's Trusts, Johns. 591; Penny v. Clarke, id. 619.

² Randfield v. Randfield, 6 Jur. n. s. 901, May, 1860.

³ s. c. 4 De Gex & Jones, 57.

⁴ s. c. 4 Drew. 147.

⁵ Audsley v. Horn, 6 Jur. n. s. 205; Webster v. Parr, 26 Beavan, 236.

⁶ Arrowsmith, *in re*, 6 Jur. n. s. 1231. See also McLachlan v. Tait, 6 Jur. n. s. 1269; Whyte v. Collins, 6 Jur. n. s. 1281. The decree in the case of Arrowsmith, *in re*, was affirmed in the Court of Appeal, except as to the question of divesting by decease before payment of the legacies, upon which their lordships expressed no opinion. 7 Jur. n. s. 9. Where the testator gave the residue of his estate to the child or children of A., deceased, and B. in equal shares, it was held to be a gift to the children of A. and of B. *in esse* at the testator's death, *per capita*. *In re Davie's Will*, 7 Jur. n. s. 118.]

⁷ *Post*, § 844, 845, 846.

§ 606. In regard to a donation *mortis causa*, which is a sort of amphibious gift between a gift *inter vivos*, and a legacy, it is not properly cognizable by the ecclesiastical courts; neither does it fall regularly within an administration; nor does it require any act of the executor to constitute a title in the donee.¹ It is properly, a gift of personal property,² by a party who is in peril of death, upon condition, that it shall presently belong to the donee, in case the donor shall die,³ but not otherwise.⁴ To give it effect, there must be a delivery of it by the donor; and it is subject to be defeated, by his subsequent personal revocation,⁵ or by his recovery or escape from the impending peril of death.⁶ If no event happens which revokes it, the title of the donee is deemed to be directly derived from the donor in his lifetime; and, therefore, in no sense is it a testamentary act.⁷ And this is the reason why the ecclesi-

¹ 1 Roper Leg. by White, ch. 1, § 2, p. 2; Thompson v. Hodgson, 2 Str. 777; Ward v. Turner, 2 Ves. 431; Miller v. Miller, 3 P. Will. 356; 3 Wooddeson, Lect. 60, p. 513; Hedges v. Hedges, Prec. Ch. 269; Gilb. Eq. 12; 2 Vern. 615.

² [And cannot apply to real estate. Meach v. Meach, 24 Verm. 591.]

³ See the late case of Staniland v. Willnott, 3 Mac. & Gord. 664; Hebb v. Hebb, 5 Gill, 507.

⁴ Ibid.; Wells v. Tucker, 3 Binn. 366, 370; Edwards v. Jones, 1 Mylne & Craig, 226; s. c. 7 Sim. 325; 1 Williams on Executors, Pt. 2, B. 2, ch. 2, § 4, p. 544 to 554 (edit. 1838); Duffield v. Elwes, 1 Bligh, n. s. 530; Lawson v. Lawson, 1 P. Will. 441; Hedges v. Hedges, Prec. Ch. 269; Gilb. Eq. 12; 2 Vern. 615; Tate v. Hilbert, 2 Ves. Jr. 121; s. c. 4 Bro. Ch. 290; Miller v. Miller, 3 P. Will. 357; Irons v. Smallpiece, 2 Barn. & Ald. 552, 553; Farquharson v. Cave, 2 Collyer, 356.

⁵ Parker v. Marston, 27 Maine, 196.

⁶ Ibid.; 1 Williams on Executors and Administrators, Pt. 2, B. 2, ch. 2, § 4, p. 544, 545, 546, 547; Ward v. Turner, 2 Ves. 431; Jones v. Selby, Prec. Ch. 300; Grattan v. Appleton, 3 Story, 755.

⁷ Ibid. Mr. Williams, in his excellent work on the Law of Executors and Administrators, says: "That, to constitute a *donatio mortis causa*, there must be two attributes. (1.) The gift must be with a view to the donor's death. (2.) It must be conditioned to take effect only on the death of the donor by the existing disorder. A third essential quality is required by our law, which, according to some authorities, was not necessary according to the Roman and civil law; namely, (3.) There must be a delivery of the subject of the donation." 1 Williams on Executors and Administrators, Pt. 2, B. 2, ch. 2, § 4, p. 544 (edit. 1838). See the remarks on this last point by Lord Hardwicke, in Ward v. Turner, 1 Ves. 439, 440, 441; Voet, ad Pand. Lib. 39, tit. 6, § 6; Tate v. Hilbert, 2 Ves. Jr. 111, 112. [A mere delivery to an agent, in the character of agent for the giver, would amount to nothing; it must be a delivery to the legatee, or

astical courts have no jurisdiction, as they can interpose only in testamentary matters. Courts of equity, however, maintain a concurrent jurisdiction in all cases of such donations, where the remedy at law is not adequate or complete. But, in such cases, the jurisdiction stands upon general grounds, and not upon any notion that a donation *mortis causâ* is, from its own nature, properly cognizable therein.

§ 606 *a*. We have had occasion to say, that a *donatio mortis causâ*¹ is of an amphibious nature,—partaking of the character of a gift *inter vivos*, and of a legacy. It differs from a legacy in these respects: (1.) It need not be proved, nay it cannot be proved, as a testamentary act, in the ecclesiastical courts; for it takes effect as a gift from the delivery by the donor to the donee in his lifetime. (2.) It requires no assent, or other act, on the part of the executor or administrator, to perfect the title of the donee. The claim is not from the executor or administrator, but against him. It differs from a gift *inter vivos*, in several respects, in which it resembles a legacy. (1.) It is ambulatory, incomplete, and revocable, during the donor's lifetime. (2.) It may be made to the wife of the donor. (3.) It is liable to the debts of the donor upon a deficiency of assets.²

§ 607. The notion of a donation *mortis causâ* was originally derived into the English law from the civil law. In that law it was thus defined: “*Mortis causâ Donatio est, quæ propter mortis fit suspicionem; cum quis ita donat, ut, si quid humanitus ei contigisset, haberet is, qui accepit. Sin autem supervixisset is, qui donavit, reciperet; vel si eum donationis pænituisset, aut prior decesserit is, cui donatum sit.*”³ It was a long time a question among

some one for the legatee. *Farquharson v. Cave*, 2 Collyer, 356. See *Moore v. Darton*, 7 Eng. Law & Eq. 134; *Wells v. Tucker*, 3 Binney, 366, 370; *McGillycuddy v. Cook*, 5 Blackf. 179, 180; 15 Maine, 429; 18 id. 225; 21 id. 185; *Sessions v. Moseley*, 4 Cush. 87.]

¹ [See an accurate exposition of the nature of this gift in *Nicholas v. Adams*, 2 Wharton, 17; *Raymond v. Sellick*, 10 Conn. 480; *Harris v. Clark*, 2 Barbour, s. c. 94; *Parish v. Stone*, 14 Pick. 198; *Miller v. Jeffries*, 4 Grattan, 472; *Sims v. Walker*, 8 Humph. 503; *Brinckerhoff v. Lawrence*, 2 Sandford, 401; *Meach v. Meach*, 24 Verm. 591; *Dole v. Lincoln*, 31 Maine, 422.]

² 1 Williams on Executors and Administrators, Pt. 2, B. 2, ch. 2, § 4, p. 552 (edit. 1838); 1 Roper on Legacies, by White, ch. 1, § 2, p. 2, 3 (3d edit.); *Bornemans v. Sidlinger*, 15 Maine, 429.

³ Inst. Lib. 2, tit. 7, § 1.

the Roman lawyers, whether a donation *mortis causâ* ought to be reputed a gift, or a legacy, inasmuch as it partakes of the nature of both (*et utriusque causæ quædam habebat insignia*); and Justinian finally settled, that it should be deemed of the nature of legacies: “Hæ mortis causâ Donationes ad exemptum legatorum redactæ sunt per omnia.¹

§ 607 a. We have already seen that by our law there can be no valid donation *mortis causâ*; (1.) unless the gift be with a view to the donor's death; (2.) unless it be conditioned to take effect only on the donor's death by his existing disorder, or in his existing illness; and (3.) unless there be an actual delivery of the subject of the donation.² This last requisite has been thought, by some learned judges, to belong exclusively to our law, and not to have existed in the Roman law.³ But a more important practical question is, what may be the subject of a *donatio mortis causâ*. There is no doubt that there may be a good donation of any thing which has a physical existence, and admits of a corporal delivery; as, for example, of jewels, gems, a bag of money, a trunk of goods; and even of things of bulk, which are capable of possession by a symbolical delivery; such as goods in a warehouse, by a delivery of the key of the warehouse.⁴ [* But where the deceased, immediately before her death, told one to take the key of a dressing-case and box, containing a watch and trinkets, and immediately upon her death to deliver them to the plaintiff, it was held, this did not constitute a valid gift *causâ mortis*, there being, during the life of the donor, no delivery to, or for, the donee.⁵] But the question was formerly mooted whether choses in action, bonds, and other incorporeal rights, could pass by a donation *mortis causâ*. The doctrine now established is, that not only negotiable notes and bills of exchange, payable to bearer, or indorsed in blank, exchequer notes [bank

¹ *Ibid.*; *Tate v. Hilbert*, 2 Ves. Jr. 118, 119.

² See *Huntington v. Gilmore*, 14 Barb. 243; *Hitch v. Davis*, 3 Md. Ch. Dec. 266; *Jones v. Deyer*, 16 Ala. 221; [* *Tate v. Leithead, Kay*, 658.]

³ *Ibid.* [See also *Bunn v. Markham*, 7 Taunt. 224; *Walsh v. Studdart*, 5 D. & W. 159, 285; 2 Colly, 356.]

⁴ See *Ward v. Turner*, 2 Ves. 443; 1 *Williams on Executors and Administrators*, Pt. 2, B. 2, ch. 2, § 4, p. 547, 548, 549; *Bunn v. Markham*, 7 Taunt. 224; *Miller v. Miller*, 3 P. Will. 356. See also *Rankin v. Wagnelin*, at the Rolls, 14 June, 1832, cited in *Chitty on Bills, Addenda*, p. 791, 8th edit. 1833; *id.* p. 2, note (a), 9th edit.

⁵ [* *Powell v. Hellicar*, 29 Beavan, 261.]

checks],¹ and bank-notes, may be the subjects of a *donatio mortis causá*, because they may, and do, in the ordinary course of business, pass by delivery; but that bonds and mortgages may also be the subjects of a *donatio mortis causá*, and pass by the delivery of the deeds and instruments, by which they are created.² Bonds have been so held, upon the ground that a bond could not be sued for at law without a *profert*; and that a court of equity would not, after a *donatio mortis causá*, accompanied with a delivery of the bond to the donee, direct the latter to give it up to the personal representative of the donor, but would hold the title of the donee to it good.³ And mortgaged deeds, when delivered, are treated but as securities for debts, and would, in the hands of the donee, be

¹ *Boutts v. Ellis*, 21 Eng. Law & Eq. 337.

² *Ibid.*; *Drury v. Smith*, 1 P. Will. 405; *Miller v. Miller*, 3 P. Will. 356. See also *Pennington v. Gittings*, 2 Gill & Johns. 208; *Bradley v. Hunt*, 5 Gill & Johns. 54; *Hill v. Chapman*, 2 Bro. Ch. 612; *Jones v. Selby*, Prec. Ch. 300; 1 *Roper on Legacies*, by White, ch. 1. § 2, p. 13, 14, 15, 16 (3d edit.); *Ward v. Turner*, 1 Ves. 441, 442; *Lee v. Boak*, 11 Gratt. 182; *Sessions v. Moseley*, 4 Cush. 87.

³ *Ibid.*; *Gardner v. Parker*, 3 Mad. 184; *Snelgrove v. Bailey*, 3 Atk. 214; *Duffield v. Elwes*, 1 Bligh, n. s. 542; *Staniland v. Willnot*, 3 Mac. & Gord. 676; *Ward v. Turner*, 2 Ves. 441, 442. In this last case, Lord Hardwicke said: "In *Bailey v. Snelgrove*, determined by me, 11th March, 1774, it was urged, where a bond was given in prospect of death, the manner of gift was admitted, the bond was delivered, and I held it a good donation *mortis causá*. It was argued that there was a want of actual delivery there, or possession, the bond being but a *chose in action*, and, therefore, there was no delivery but of the paper. If I went too far in that case, it is not a reason I should go farther; and I choose to stop here. But I am of opinion that decree was right, and differs from this case; for, though it is true, that a bond, which is specialty, is a *chose in action*, and its principal value consists in the thing in action, yet some property is conveyed by the delivery; for the property is vested; and to this degree, that the law-books say, the person to whom this specialty is given, may cancel, burn, and destroy it. The consequence of which is, that it puts it in his power to destroy the obligee's power of bringing an action, because no one can bring an action on a bond without a *profert in curia*. Another thing made it amount to a delivery; that the law allows it a locality; and, therefore, a bond is *boná notabilia*, so as to require a prerogative administration, where a bond is in one diocese, and goods in another. Not that this is conclusive. This reasoning I have gone upon, is agreeable to *Jenk. Cent.* 109, case 9, relating to delivery to effectuate gifts. How *Jenkins* applied that rule of law he mentions there, I know not; but rather apprehend, he applied it to a donation *mortis causá*; for, if to a donation *inter vivos*, I doubt he went too far." See also *Wells v. Tucker*, 3 Binn. 366; *Bradley v. Hunt*, 5 Gill & Johns. 54; [*Grover v. Grover*, 21 Pick. 264].

governed by the same rules. The delivery, in the case of a mortgage is, therefore, treated, not as a complete act, passing the property, but as creating a trust, by operation of law, in favor of the donee, which a court of equity will enforce, in the same manner as it would the right of the donee to a bond.¹ In short, in all cases in which a *donatio mortis causâ* is carried into effect by a court of equity, the court has not considered the interest as completely vested by the gift; but that it is so vested in the donee, that the donee has a right to call on a court of equity for its aid; and, in case of personal estate, to compel the executor or administrator of the donor to carry into effect the intention manifested by the person whom he represents; as, for example, if the donation be a bond, to compel the executor or administrator to allow the donee to use his name in suing the bond, upon being indemnified; because it is a trust for the donee.²

¹ *Duffield v. Elwes*, 1 Bligh, n. s. 497, 530, 534, 535, 536, 541, 542, which overrules the decision of the Vice Chancellor in the same case. 1 Sim. & Stu. 243.

² *Duffield v. Elwes*, 1 Bligh, n. s. 497, 530, 534; *Staniland v. Willnott*, 3 Mac. & Gord. 676; *Gardner v. Parker*, 3 Mad. 184. We have already extracted, in another place (*ante*, § 433, note 2), a part of the opinion of Lord Eldon on this subject, which it may, perhaps, be useful here to repeat. "The question" (said he) "is this, Whether the act of the donor, being, as far as the act of the donor itself is to be viewed, complete, the persons who represent that donor — in respect of personalty, the executor, and in respect of realty, the heir-at-law — are not bound to complete that which, as far as the act of the donor is concerned in the question, was incomplete; in other words, Where it is the gift of a personal chattel, or the gift of a deed, which is the subject of the *donatio mortis causâ*, whether, after the death of the individual who made that gift, the executor is not to be considered a trustee for the donee; and whether, on the other hand, if it be a gift affecting the real interest, — and I distinguish now between a security upon land and the land itself, — whether, if it be a gift of such an interest in law, the heir-at-law of the testator is not, by virtue of the operation of the trust, which is created, not by indenture but a bequest arising from operation of law, a trustee for that donee." His lordship afterwards, in discussing the point, Whether a mortgage would pass by a delivery of it as a donation *mortis causâ*, said: "Lord Hardwicke, with respect to the bond (and it is necessary that I should take some notice of this, because there has been a change in the law, which that great judge did not foresee, but which in later times, and in my own time, has become very familiar in the courts of law), — Lord Hardwicke states, as one ground of his opinion, in the case of the bond, that it is a good gift *causâ mortis*, because, he says, he who has got the bond may do what he pleases with it. He certainly disables the person who has not got the bond from bringing an action upon it; for, says Lord Hardwicke, no man ever heard (and I have seen

§ 607 *b*. The same doctrine is applicable to the case of a *donatio mortis causá* of a bond and mortgage by the mortgagee to the mortgagor, consummated by the delivery of the bond and mortgage to him.¹ In such a case, it will operate as a release or discharge of the debt, if the donor should die of his existing illness. For (it has been said) if it was a gift *inter vivos*, the mortgagee could not get back the deeds from the mortgagor; but, by operation of law a trust would be created in the mortgagee, to make good a gift of the debt to the mortgagor, to whom he had delivered the deeds.² But, however this may be, it seems clear that in the case of such a *donatio mortis causá*, the representatives of the donor would never be permitted to enforce the mortgage or bond against the donee.³

in the manuscript of the same Lord Hardwicke, that he said no man will ever hear) that a person shall bring an action upon a bond without the *profert* of that bond. But we now have got into a practice of sliding from courts of equity into courts of law the doctrine respecting lost instruments; and I take the liberty, most humbly, of saying, that, when that doctrine was so transplanted, it was transplanted upon the idea that the thing might be as well conducted in a court of law as in a court of equity, — a doctrine which cannot be held by any person who knows what the doctrine of courts of equity is as to a lost instrument. Then, if the delivery of a bond would, as it is admitted (notwithstanding any change in the doctrine about *profert*), — if the delivery of a bond would give the debt in that bond, so as to secure to the donee of that bond the debt so given by the delivery of the bond, the question is, Whether the person having got, by the delivery of that bond, a right to call upon the executor to make his title by suing, or giving him authority to sue upon the bond, what are we to do with the other securities, if they are not given up? But there is another question to which an answer is to be given: What are we to do with respect to the other securities, if they are delivered? In the one case the bond and mortgage are delivered; in the other, the judgment, which is to be considered on the same ground as a specialty, is delivered. With that the evidences of the debts are all delivered. The instrument containing the covenant to pay is delivered. They are all delivered in such a way that the donor could never have got the deeds back again. Then the question is, Whether, regard being had to what is the nature of a mortgage, contradistinguishing it from an estate in land, whose circumstances do not as effectually give the property in the debt, as if the debt was secured by a bond only? The opinion which I have formed, is, that this is a good *donatio mortis causá*, raising by operation of law a trust; a trust, which, being raised by operation of law, is not within the Statute of Frauds, but a trust which a court of equity will execute.”

¹ See *Meredith v. Watson*, 23 Eng. Law & Eq. 250.

² *Richards v. Symes*, 2 Atk. 319; 2 Barnard, 90; 2 Eq. Abridg. 647; *Duffield v. Elwes*, 1 Bligh, 537, 538, 539, n. s.; *Hurst v. Beach*, 5 Mad. 351.

³ *Ibid.*

§ 607 c. On the other hand, as by our law there must be a delivery of the thing, or of the instrument which represents it, in order to make a good *donatio mortis causa*, if the thing is incapable of delivery it cannot be the subject of such donation; for it is said, there must be a parting with the legal power and dominion over the thing, which is evidenced only by the delivery. Thus, a mere chose in action, not subsisting in any specific instrument, cannot pass by a *donatio mortis causa*. So, it has been ruled, that a promissory note or bill of exchange, not payable to bearer, or indorsed in blank, cannot so take effect, inasmuch as no property therein can pass by the delivery of the instrument.¹ So, it has been ruled, South Sea Annuity Receipts cannot be the proper subject of a *donatio mortis causa*; because the delivery thereof does not pass the property in the annuities; and stocks and annuities are, by act of Parliament, made capable of a transfer of the legal property.² But it may admit of doubt, whether the doctrine of these

¹ *Miller v. Miller*, 3 P. Will. 356, 358; *Ward v. Turner*, 2 Ves. 442, 443; *Pennington v. Gittings*, 2 Gill & Johns. 208; *Bradley v. Hunt*, 5 Gill & Johns. 54; [*contra*, *Grover v. Grover*, 24 Pick. 261; *Brown v. Brown*, 18 Conn. 410.]

² *Ward v. Turner*, 2 Ves. Sen. 431, 442, 443. Lord Hardwicke, on this occasion, said; "Therefore, from the authority of Swinburne, and all these cases, the consequence is, that by the civil law, as received and allowed in England, and consequently by the law of England, tradition or delivery is necessary to make a good donation *mortis causa*; which brings it to the question, whether delivery of the three receipts was a sufficient delivery of the thing given to effectuate the gift. I am of opinion it was not. It is argued, that though some delivery is necessary, yet delivery of the thing is not necessary, but delivery of any thing by way of symbol is sufficient. But I cannot agree to that. Nor do I find any authority for that in the civil law, which required delivery to some gifts, or in the law of England, which required delivery throughout. Where the civil law requires it, they require actual tradition, delivery over of the thing. So in all cases in this court; delivery of the thing given is relied on, and not in the name of the thing; as in the delivery of sixpence, in *Shargold v. Shargold*; if it was allowed any effect, that would have been a gift *mortis causa*, not as a will; but that was allowed as testamentary, proved as a will, and stood. The only case wherein such a symbol seems to be held good, is *Jones v. Selby*. But I am of opinion, that amounted to the same thing as delivery of possession of the tally, provided it was in the trunk at the time. Therefore it was rightly compared to the cases upon 21 J. 1, *Ryal v. Rowles*, and others. It never was imagined on that statute, that delivery of a mere symbol, in name of the thing, would be sufficient to take it out of that statute; yet, notwithstanding, delivery of the key of bulky goods, where wines, &c., are, has been allowed as delivery of the possession; because it is the way of coming at the possession, or to make use of the

last cases can now, upon principle, be supported; for the ground, upon which courts of equity now support donations *mortis causâ*, is not, that a complete property in the thing must pass by the delivery; but that it must so far pass, by the delivery of the instrument, as to give a title to the donee to the assistance of a court of equity to make the donation complete.¹ The doctrine no longer prevails, that where a delivery will not execute a complete gift *inter vivos*, it cannot create a *donatio mortis causâ*; because it would not prevent the property from vesting in the executor; and, as a court of equity will not *inter vivos* compel a party to complete his gift, so it will not compel the executor to complete the gift of his testator.² On the contrary, the doctrine now established by thing; and, therefore, the key is not a symbol, which would not do. If so, then delivery of these receipts amounts to so much waste paper; for, if one purchases stock or annuities, what avail are they after acceptance of the stock? It is true, they are of some avail, as to the identity of the person coming to receive; but after that is over, they are nothing but waste paper, and are seldom taken care of afterwards. Suppose Fly, instead of delivering over these receipts to Mosely, had delivered over the broker's note, whom he had employed, that had not been a good delivery of the possession. There is no color for it; it is no evidence of the thing, or part of the title to it. For, suppose it had been a mortgage in question, and a separate receipt had been taken for the mortgage money, not on the back of the deed (which was a very common way formerly, and is frequently seen in the evidence of ancient titles), and the mortgagee had delivered over this separate receipt for the consideration-money, that would not have been a good delivery of the possession, nor given the mortgage *mortis causâ* by force of that act. Nor does it appear to me by proof, that possession of these three receipts continued with Mosely from the time they were given, in February, to the time of Fly's death; for there is a witness, who speaks, that in some short time before his death, Fly showed him these receipts, and said he intended them for his uncle Mosely. Therefore I am of opinion, it would be most dangerous to allow this donation *mortis causâ*, from parol proof of delivery of such receipts, which are not regarded or taken care of after acceptance. And if these annuities are called *choses in action*, there is less reason to allow of it in this case, than in any other *choses in action*; because stocks and annuities are capable of a transfer of the legal property by act of Parliament, which might be done easily; and if the intestate had such an aversion to make a will, as supposed, he might have transferred to Mosely; consequently, this is merely legatary, and amounts to a nuncupative will, and contrary to the Statute of Frauds, and would introduce a greater breach on that law than ever was yet made; for, if you take away the necessity of delivery of the thing given, it remains merely nuncupative." The decision of Lord Eldon in *Duffield v. Elwes*, 1 Bligh, n. s. 498, very much shakes the reasoning of Lord Hardwicke on this particular point.

¹ *Grover v. Grover*, 24 Pick. 261; *Brown v. Brown*, 18 Conn. 410.

² *Duffield v. Elwes*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 239, overturned on appeal in 1 Bligh, n. s. 498.

the highest authority is (as we have seen) that courts of equity do not consider the interest as completely vested in the donee, but treat the delivery of the instrument as creating a trust for the donee, to be enforced in equity.¹

[* § 607 d. Within the last few months (July, 1859), the question, how far an undorsed promissory note, payable to the donor or order, may be the subject of a gift, *causâ mortis*, came before the Master of the Rolls, Sir John Romilly; and that learned judge held

¹ Duffield v. Elwes, 1 Bligh, n. s. 497, 530, 534; Staniland v. Willnot, 3 Mac. & Gord. 676. In Pennington v. Gittings, 2 Gill & Johns. 208, the Court of Appeals of Maryland held, that a delivery of a certificate of bank stock, transferrable at the bank only, personally or by attorney, indorsed in blank by the donor and delivered to the donee, could not pass as a *donatio mortis causâ*. In Bradley v. Hunt, 5 Gill & Johns. 54, the same learned court decided that a promissory note, or certificate of the profit, payable to the order of the donor, and delivered to the donee, was not a good *donatio mortis causâ*. In each of these cases the court proceeded upon the same general ground, that, to constitute a *donatio mortis causâ*, the gift should be full and complete at the time, passing from the donor the legal power and dominion over the thing intended to be given, and leaving nothing to be done by him or his executor to perfect it; and that, in these cases, the thing was not susceptible of such delivery, and the delivery of the instrument did not convey a perfect title to the thing. The court relied upon the cases of Miller v. Miller, 3 P. Will. 356, 358; Ward v. Turner, 2 Ves. 431; Tate v. Hilbert, 2 Ves. Jr. 112, and Duffield v. Elwes, 1 Sim. & Stu. 239, as in point. But, since the decision in 1 Bligh, n. s. 497, these cases can no longer be deemed satisfactory authorities. On the other hand, in Wright v. Wright, 1 Cowen, 598, the Supreme Court of New York held that a promissory note *of the donor himself*, executed in his last illness, and delivered by the maker to the donee (the payee) in contemplation of death, was a good *donatio mortis causâ*, although no consideration passed. [But this case has been distinctly overruled in the same court. Harris v. Clark, 2 Barbour, S. C. 94; s. c. 3 Comst. 93. See Halley v. Adams, 16 Verm. 206; Parish v. Stone, 14 Pick. 198; Copp v. Sawyer, 6 N. H. 386; Smith v. Kittridge, 21 Verm. 238; Raymond v. Sellick, 10 Conn. 480; Holliday v. Atkinson, 5 B. & C. 501; Craig v. Craig, 3 Barb. Ch. 77. So, an indorsement by the donor of a note running to him as payee, given *causâ mortis*, creates no liability against his estate. Weston v. Hight, 17 Maine, 287. Neither does his draft unaccepted by the drawee, Harris v. Clark, *supra*. But the gift of the promissory note of a third person, *not the donor* undorsed, is valid. Grover v. Grover, 24 Pick. 261; Sessions v. Mosely, 4 Cush. 87.] And in Coutant v. Schuyler, 1 Paige, 316, Mr. Chancellor Walworth held that a promissory note of a third person was a proper subject of a *donatio mortis causâ*, and might be delivered to a third person for the benefit of the donee. The court said that there was no real difference between the delivery of a bond and the delivery of a note, as a *donatio mortis causâ*. Each is valid. See also Wells v. Tucker, 3 Binn. 366.

that, according to the latest determinations of the English courts, such a gift was valid.¹ .

§ 607 *e.* According to the civil law, a donation *mortis causâ* may be made subject to a trust or condition. “Eorum, quibus mortis causâ donatum est, fidei committi quòquo tempore potest; quod fidei commissum, hæredes, salva Falcidiæ ratione, quam in his quoque donationibus exemplo legatorum, locum habere placuit, præstābunt. Si pars donationis fidei commissio teneatur, fidei commissum quoque munere Falcidiæ fungetur. Si tamen alimenta præstari voluit, collationis totum onus in residuo donationis esse respondendum erit ex defuncti voluntate, qui de majore pecunia præstari non dubie voluit, integra.² Ab eo, qui neque legatum neque fidei commissum, neque hæreditatem vel mortis causâ donationem accepit nihil per fidei commissum relinqui potest.”³ The point does not seem to have been directly established in modern equity jurisprudence; but the manifest inclination of the courts is, to sustain such a donation, although it is coupled with a trust or condition.⁴

§ 608. It has been already stated, that, in the interpretation of purely personal legacies courts of equity follow the rules of the spiritual courts; and in those, which are charged on lands, the rules of the common law.⁵ But, although this is generally true, it is not to be taken for granted, that courts of equity do, in all cases, follow the rules of courts of common law, in deciding upon the nature, extent, interpretation, and effect of legacies. There are some cases, in which courts of equity act upon principles peculiar to themselves in relation to legacies.⁶ But any attempt

¹ [* *Veal v. Veal*, 6 Jur. N. S. 527; s. P. *Bates v. Kempton*, 7 Gray, 382. And in such case the donee may maintain an action in the name of the administrator of the donor (notwithstanding his dissent) to recover the amount due on the note. *Ibid.* And the same principle is again recognized in *Chase v. Redding*, 13 Gray, 418, 420.]

² Dig. Lib. 31, tit. 1, l. 77, § 1, cited in *Hambrooke v. Simmons*, 4 Russ. 27.

³ Cod. Lib 6, tit. 42, l. 9, cited 4 Russ. 27.

⁴ See *Drury v. Smith*, 1 P. Will. 404; *Blount v. Burrow*, 4 Bro. Ch. 75; *Hambrooke v. Simmons*, 4 Russ. 25; *Hill v. Hill*, 8 Mees. & Welsb. 401; 1 *Williams on Executors and Administrators*, Pt. 2, B. 2, ch. 2, § 4, p. 548, note (v) (edit. 1838).

⁵ *Ante*, § 602; *Reily v. Monck*, 3 Ridgew. Parl. Cas. 243.

⁶ See 2 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 4*, Pt. 1, ch. 1, § 4, 5, and notes (i) and (l); 3 *Woodes. Lect.* 59, p. 479, 480, 481; *id.* 494; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 1*, ch. 1, § 2, p. 106; *Arnald v. Arnald*, 1 Bro. Ch. 403.

to point them out in a satisfactory manner would require a general review of the whole doctrine of legacies, a task which is incompatible with the objects of the present commentaries.¹

CHAPTER XI.

CONFUSION OF BOUNDARIES.

[* § 609-613. Ground of jurisdiction in regard to confusion of boundaries.

§ 614. The civil law held that the proprietors impliedly bound themselves to maintain their boundaries.

§ 615. There must be some special ground of equitable interference.

§ 616. Lord Northington's definition.

§ 617. Lord Thurlow's ground of denying the jurisdiction.

§ 618. Not allowable, to determine right to tithes.

§ 619. Fraud a special ground of equitable interference.

§ 620. So where the confusion resulted from breach of confidence.

§ 621. So also to prevent multiplicity of suits.

§ 622. Where otherwise rents cannot be enforced by distress.

§ 623. Where an agent has fraudulently mingled his goods with those of the principal, equity treats them as belonging to the principal.]

§ 609. HAVING disposed of the subject of ADMINISTRATION AND LEGACIES, we shall next proceed to the consideration of another head of concurrent jurisdiction, arising from the confusion of the boundaries of land, and the confusion, or entanglement, of other rights and claims of an analogous nature, calling for the interposition of courts of equity, in order to restore, and ascertain, and fix them.

§ 610. In the first place, in regard to CONFUSION OF BOUNDARIES. The issuing of commissions to ascertain boundaries is certainly a

¹ The whole subject of legacies is very amply discussed in Mr. Roper's *Treatise on Legacies*, as newly edited by Mr. White; in 2 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 4, Pt. 1, ch. 1, 2; in *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 1, ch. 1, § 2, p. 104 to 135, and in *Woodeson, Lect.* 60, p. 509, &c. The most important topics are the description of the persons who are to take; when legacies are specific or not; when they are cumulative or not; when they lapse, or merge; when there is an ademption of them; when an abatement of them; when conditional; when personal, or chargeable on land; when they vest; when interest is allowed; and lastly, the marshaling of assets in favor of them.

very ancient branch of equity jurisdiction.¹ A number of cases of this sort will be found in the earliest of the chancery reports. Thus, in *Mullineux v. Mullineux*, in 14th Jac. I., a commission was awarded, "to set out lands, that lye promiscuously, to be liable for the payment of debts." In *Peckering v. Kimpton*, 5 Car. I.,² a commission was awarded, "to set out copyhold lands free from land which lye obscured; if the commissioners cannot sever it, then to set out so much in lieu thereof."

§ 611. It is not very easy to ascertain with exactness the origin of this jurisdiction.³ It has been supposed by Lord Northington and Lord Thurlow, that consent was the ground upon which it was originally exercised.⁴ There are two writs in the register, concerning the adjustment of controverted boundaries, from one of which (in the opinion of Sir William Grant) it is probable that the exercise of this jurisdiction in the Court of Chancery took its commencement.⁵ The one is the writ *De Rationabilibus divisis*, which properly lies, where two men have lands in divers towns or hamlets, so that one is seised of the land in one town or hamlet, and the other of the land in the other town or hamlet by himself; and they do not know the boundaries of the towns or hamlets, whereby to ascertain which is the land of one, and which is the land of the other. In such a case, to set the bounds certain, this writ lies for the one against the other.⁶ The other writ is *De Perambulatione facienda*. This writ is sued out with the assent of both parties, where they are in doubt of the bounds of their lordships or manors, or of their towns. And upon such assent, the writ issues to the sheriff to make the perambulation, and to set out the bounds and limits between them in certainty.⁷ And it is added, in Fitzherbert (in which he follows the rule of the *Registrum Brevium*), that the perambulation may be made for divers towns, and in divers counties; and the parties ought to come into the chancery, and there acknowledge and grant that a perambula-

¹ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, ch. 1, § 3, n. 1, p. 301, 302.

² Tothill, 39 (edit. 1649). See also *Wake v. Conyers*, 1 Eden, 337, note; 2 White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cases, 318, and notes; *Marquis of Bute v. The Glamorganshire Co.*, 1 Phillips, Ch. 681. See Co. Litt. 169 a; Hargrave's note 23, vii.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Speer v. Crawter*, 2 Meriv. 417.

⁵ Ibid.; *Regist. Brevium*, 157 b.

⁶ *Fitzherb. Nat. Brev.* 300 [128].

⁷ *Fitzherb. Nat. Brev.* 309 [133].

tion be made betwixt them; and the acknowledgment shall be enrolled in the chancery, and thereupon a commission or writ shall issue forth.¹

§ 612. Sir William Grant further supposes, that the jurisdiction having thus originated in consent, the next step would probably be, to grant the commission on the application of one party, who showed an equitable ground for obtaining it, such as that a tenant or copyholder had destroyed, or not preserved, the boundaries between his own property and that of his lessor or lord. And to its exercise, on such an equitable ground, no objection has ever been made,² and, it may be added, no just objection can be made.

§ 613. This account of the origin of the chancery jurisdiction seems highly probable in itself; but however satisfactory it may seem, it can scarcely be said to afford more than a reasonable conjecture, and is not a conclusive proof, that such was the actual origin. In truth, the recent discoveries made of the actual exercise of chancery jurisdiction in early times, as disclosed in the Report of the Parliamentary Commissioners, already referred to in a former part of these Commentaries, are sufficient to teach us to rely with a subdued confidence upon all such conjectural sources of jurisdiction.³ It is very certain, that in some cases the court of chancery has granted commissions, or directed issues, on no other apparent ground, than that the boundaries of manors were in controversy.⁴ And Lord Northington seems to have assigned a different origin to the jurisdiction from that already suggested, upon one important occasion, at least; namely, that parties originally came into the court for relief, in cases of confusion of boundaries, under the equity of preventing multiplicity of suits.⁵

§ 614. The civil law was far more provident than ours, upon the subject of boundaries. It considered, that there was a tacit agreement, or duty, between adjacent proprietors, to keep up and preserve the boundaries between their respective estates; and it enabled all persons having an interest to bring a suit to have the boundaries between them settled; and this, whether they were

¹ *Ibid.*; *Regis. Brev.* 157, and *Regula*, *ibid.*

² *Speer v. Crawter*, 2 *Meriv.* 417.

³ *Ante*, § 47, 48, and notes; *ibid.* § 44, and notes.

⁴ *Ibid.* See *Lethulier v. Castlemain*, 1 *Dick.* 46; s. c. 2 *Eq. Abridg.* 161; *Sel. Cas. Ch.* 60; *Metcalf v. Beckwith*, 2 *P. Will.* 376.

⁵ *Wake v. Conyers*, 1 *Eden*, 334; s. c. 1 *Cox*, 360.

tenants for years, usufructuaries, mortgagees, or other proprietors. The action was called *actio finium regendorum*; and if the possession was also in dispute, that might be ascertained and fixed in the same suit, and, indeed, was incident to it.¹ Perhaps it might not have been originally unfit for courts of equity to have entertained the same general jurisdiction, in cases of confusion of boundaries, upon the ground of enforcing a specific performance of the implied engagement or duty of the civil law. Such a broad origin or exercise of the jurisdiction has, however, never been claimed or exercised.

§ 615. But, whatever may have been the origin of this branch of jurisdiction, it is one which has been watched with a good deal of jealousy by courts of equity of late years; and there seems no inclination to favor it, unless special grounds are laid to sustain it. The general rule now adopted is, not to entertain jurisdiction, in cases of confusion of boundaries, upon the ground, that the boundaries are in controversy;² but to require that there should be some equity superinduced by the act of the parties; such as some particular circumstances of fraud; or some confusion, where one person has ploughed too near another; or some gross negligence, omission, or misconduct, on the part of persons whose special duty it is to preserve or perpetuate the boundaries.³

§ 616. Where there is an ordinary legal remedy, there is certainly no ground for the interference of courts of equity, unless some peculiar equity supervenes, which a court of common law cannot take notice of or protect. It has been said by Lord Northington, that where there is no legal remedy, it does not therefore follow, that there must be an equitable remedy, unless there is also an equitable right. Where there is a legal right, there must be a legal remedy; and if there is no legal right, in many cases there can be no equitable one.⁴ On this account he dismissed a bill to settle the boundaries between manors, it appearing, that

¹ See 1 Domat, B. 2, tit. 6, § 1, 2, p. 308, 309; Co. Litt. 169 *a*, Hargrave's note 23; Dig. Lib. 10, tit. 1, l. 1, per tot.

² *Haskell v. Allen*, 23 Maine, 448; *Stewart v. Coulter*, 4 Rand, 74; *Hale v. Darter*, 5 Humph. 79; *Topp v. Williams*, 7 Humph. 569. But see *Lethulier v. Castlemain*, 1 Dick. 46; s. c. 2 Eq. Abridg. 161; Sel. Cas. in Ch. 60.

³ *Wake v. Conyers*, 1 Eden, 331; s. c. 1 Cox, 360. See *Miller v. Warming-ton*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 473; Eden on Injunctions, ch. 16, p. 361, 362.

⁴ *Ibid.*

there was no dispute as to the right of soil and freehold, on both sides the boundary marks (which right was admitted by the bill to be in the defendant), and that the right of seignory alone (an incorporeal hereditament), and not that of the soil, was in dispute. And his lordship on this occasion remarked, that "all the cases where the court has entertained bills for establishing boundaries have been where the soil itself was in question, or where there might have been a multiplicity of suits."¹

§ 617. So in a case, where a bill was brought by one parish against another to ascertain the boundaries of the two parishes in making their rates; and a number of houses had been built upon land formerly waste; and it was doubtful to which parish each part of the waste belonged; Lord Thurlow refused to interfere, and observed that the greatest inconvenience might arise from doing so. For, if a commission were granted, and the bounds set out by commissioners, any other parties, on a different ground of dispute, might equally claim another commission. These other commissioners might make a different return, and so, in place of settling differences, endless confusion would be created.² In another report of the same case, he is reported to have said, If he should entertain the bill, and direct an issue in such a case as that, he did not see what case would be peculiar to the courts of law, and he did not know how to extract a rule from the *Mayor of York v. Pilkington* (1 Atk. 282).³ Where there was a common right to be tried, such a proceeding was to be understood. That boundary between the two jurisdictions was apparent. This is the case, where the tenants of a manor claim a right of common by custom, because the right of all the tenants of the manor is tried by trying the right of one. But in the case before him, he

¹ Ibid.

² *St. Luke's v. St. Leonard's Parish, or Warring v. Hotham*, cited by Chief Baron McDonald, in *Atkins v. Hatton*, 2 Anstr. 395; s. c. 2 Dick. 550.

³ *Warring v. Hotham*, 1 Bro. Ch. 40, and Mr. Belt's note (2). The case of the *Mayor of York v. Pilkington*, 1 Atk. 282, was a bill brought to quiet the plaintiffs in a right of fishery in the river Ouse, of which they claimed the sole fishery against the defendants, who (as was suggested in the bill) claimed several rights, either as lords of manors, or as occupiers of the adjacent lands; and also for a discovery and account of the fish taken. The defendants demurred to the bill as being matter cognizable at law only. Lord Hardwicke at first sustained the demurrer, but afterwards overruled it. Lord Thurlow disapproved of this final decision; and to this, a part of his reasoning, in 1 Bro. Ch. 40, is addressed.

saw no common right, which the parishioners had in the boundaries of the parish. It would be to try the boundaries of all the parishes in the kingdom on account of the poor-laws.¹ The ground of dismissing the bill seems, from these very imperfect statements of the case, to have been, first, that the proper remedy was at law; and, secondly, that no equity was superinduced, for it would not even suppress multiplicity of suits.

§ 618. In *Atkins v. Hatton* (2 Anstr. 386), the court refused to entertain a bill brought by the rector of a parish principally for an account of tithes, and to have a commission to settle the boundaries of the parish and the glebe. The court said, "The plaintiff here calls upon the court to grant a commission to ascertain the boundaries of the parish, upon the presumption that all the lands which shall be found within those boundaries would be tithable to him. That is, indeed, a *prima facie* inference; but by no means conclusive. And there is no instance of the court ever granting a commission, in order to attain a remote consequential advantage. It is a jurisdiction which courts of equity have always been very cautious of exercising." It is observable, that no special equity was here set up. But the party desired the commission solely upon the ground of founding a possible right against some persons for tithes, upon the ground, that the land which they occupied was intraparochial and tithable. This was properly a matter at law to be ascertained by a special suit against every owner or occupant of land severally, and not against them jointly, in a bill to ascertain boundaries.

§ 619. These cases are sufficient to show, that the existence of a controverted boundary by no means constitutes a sufficient ground for the interposition of courts of equity, to ascertain and fix that boundary. Between independent proprietors such cases would be left to the proper redress at law.² It is, therefore, necessary to maintain such a bill (as has been already stated), that some peculiar equity should be superinduced.³ In other words,

¹ *Warring v. Hotham*, or *St. Luke's v. St. Leonard's Parish*, 1 Bro. Ch. 40; s. c. 2 Dick. 250. See *Metcalf v. Beckwith*, 2 P. Will. 376.

² *Speer v. Crawter*, 2 Meriv. 410, 417; *Miller v. Warmington*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 484; *Locker v. Rolle*, 3 Ves. 4. [* See *Wolcott v. Robbins*, 26 Conn. 236.]

³ *Wake v. Conyers*, 1 Eden, 331; s. c. 1 Cox, 360; *Speer v. Crawter*, 2 Meriv. 417, 418.

there must be some equitable ground attaching itself to the controversy. And we may, therefore, inquire, what will constitute such a ground? This has been in part already suggested. In the first place, it may be stated, that if the confusion of boundaries has been occasioned by fraud, that alone will constitute a sufficient ground for the interference of the court.¹ And if the fraud is established, the court will by commission ascertain the boundaries, if practicable; and, if not practicable, will do justice between the parties by assigning reasonable boundaries; or setting out lands of equal value.²

§ 620. In the next place, it will be a sufficient ground for the exercise of jurisdiction, that there is a relation between the parties, which makes it the duty of one of them to preserve and protect the boundaries; and that, by his negligence or misconduct, the confusion of boundaries has arisen. Thus, if, through the default of a tenant, or a copyholder (who is under an implied obligation to preserve them), there arises a confusion of boundaries, the court will interfere, as against such tenant or copyholder, to ascertain and fix the boundaries.³ But, even in such cases, it is further indispensable to aver, and to establish by suitable proofs, that the boundaries, without such assistance, cannot be found.⁴ And the relation of the parties, entitling them to the redress, must also be clearly stated; for, where the parties claim by adverse titles, without any superinduced equity, we have already seen, that the remedy is purely at law.⁵

§ 621. In the next place, a bill in equity will lie to ascertain and fix boundaries, when it will prevent a multiplicity of suits. This is an old head of equity jurisdiction; and it has been very properly applied to cases of boundaries.⁶ Indeed, in many cases

¹ This is understood to have been the ground of the decision of the House of Lords in *Rouse v. Barker*, 3 Bro. Ch. 180, reversing the decree of the Exchequer in the same cause. See *Atkins v. Hatton*, 2 Anstruth, 396.

² *Speer v. Crawler*, 2 Meriv. 418; *Duke of Leeds v. Earl of Strafford*, 4 Ves. 181; *Grierson v. Eyre*, 9 Ves. 345; *Attorney General v. Fullerton*, 2 Ves. & Beam. 263; *Willis v. Parkinson*, 2 Meriv. 507. The common form of a decree for a commission, in a case of this nature, will be found in *Willis v. Parkinson*, 2 Meriv. 506, 509; *Duke of Leeds v. Strafford*, 4 Ves. 186.

³ *Ibid.*; *Ashton v. Lord Exeter*, 6 Ves. 293; *Miller v. Warmington*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 472; *Attorney General v. Fullerton*, 2 Ves. & Beam. 263; *Speer v. Crawler*, 17 Ves. 216.

⁴ *Miller v. Warmington*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 472.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Wake v. Conyers*, 1 Eden, 331; s. c. 1 Cox, 360; *Warring v. Hotham*, 1

of this nature, as, for instance, where the right affects a large number of persons, such as a common right in lands, or in a waste, claimed by parishioners, commoners, and others, where the boundaries have become confused by lapse of time, accident, or mistake, the appropriate remedy to adjust such conflicting claims, and to prevent expensive and interminable litigation, seems properly to be in equity.¹ And it will not constitute any objection to a bill to settle the boundaries between two estates, that they are situate in a foreign country, if, in other respects, the bill is, from its frame, properly maintainable.²

§ 622. There are cases of an analogous nature (which constitute the second class of cases, arising from confusion or entanglement of other rights and claims than to lands), where a mischief, otherwise irremediable, arising from confusion of boundaries, has been redressed in courts of equity. Thus, where a rent is chargeable on lands, and the remedy by distress is, by confusion of boundaries, or otherwise, become impracticable; the jurisdiction of equity has been most beneficially exerted to adjust the rights and settle the claims of the parties.³

§ 623. Other illustrations will present themselves more appropriately under other heads, in the course of these Commentaries. One instance, however, may be mentioned, in which courts of equity administer the most wholesome moral justice, following out the principles of law, and that is, where an agent, by fraud or gross negligence,⁴ has confounded his own property with that of

Bro. Ch. 40; s. c. cited 2 Anstruth, 395; *Bouverie v. Prentice*, 1 Bro. Ch. 200; *Mayor of York v. Pilkington*, 1 Atk. 282, 284. See *Whaley v. Dawson*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 370, 371.

¹ See *ibid.*; *Marquis of Bute v. The Glamorganshire Co.*, 1 Phillips, Ch. 681.

² *Penn v. Lord Baltimore*, 1 Ves. 444; *Pike v. Hoare*, 2 Eden, 182; *Bayley v. Edwards*, 3 Swanst. 703; *Tulloch v. Hartley*, 1 Younge & Coll. New Cas. in Chan. 114. [* We trust it will not be inferred from what is said in the text, that courts of equity will entertain a bill to settle boundaries, in a strictly foreign country, having no dependence upon the State where the court exists.]

³ *Bowman v. Yeat*, cited 1 Ch. Cas. 145, 146; *Duke of Leeds v. Powell*, 1 Ves. 171, and *Belt's Supp.* 98; *Bouverie v. Prentice*, 1 Bro. Ch. 200; *North v. Earl of Strafford*, 3 P. Will. 148, 149; *Duke of Leeds v. New Radnor*, 2 Bro. Ch. 338, 518; *Attorney General v. Stephens*, 35 Eng. Law & Eq. 390; *Mitf. Eq. Pl.* by *Jeremy*, 117; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 1, ch. 3, § 3, and note (*g*). *Post*, § 689.

⁴ [*Quære*, whether negligence merely, of the agent, in permitting the confusion will forfeit his property in his portion. See *Pratt v. Bryant*, 20 Verm. 333.]

his principal, so that they are not distinguishable. In such a case, the whole will be treated in equity as belonging to the principal, so far as it is incapable of being distinguished.¹

CHAPTER XII.

DOWER.

[* § 624-631. In England, courts of equity seem to possess an independent concurrent jurisdiction in matters of dower. And although most of the cases may be justified upon special grounds for resort to equity, such as the necessity for discovery, or the removal of intervening titles, and the like, yet they are not decided, mainly, upon any such grounds.

§ 632. In America, the resort to courts of equity, in matters of dower, is much less frequent, and generally for some special reason.

§ 632 *a*, 632 *b*. How far settlements bar claim of dower.]

§ 624. ANOTHER head of concurrent equitable jurisdiction is in matters of DOWER. As dower is a strictly legal right, it might seem, at first view, that the proper remedy belonged to courts of common law. The jurisdiction of courts of equity, in matters of dower, for the purpose of assisting the widow by a discovery of lands or title-deeds, or for the removing of impediments to her rendering her legal title available at law, has never been doubted.² And, indeed, it is extremely difficult to perceive any just ground upon which to rest an objection to it, which would not apply with equal force to the remedial justice of courts of equity, in all other cases of legal rights in a similar predicament. But the question has been made, how far courts of equity should entertain general jurisdiction to give general relief in those cases where there appears to be no obstacle to her legal remedy.³ Upon this question

¹ *Lupton v. White*, 16 Ves. 432; *Panton v. Panton*, cited *ibid.*; *Chedworth v. Edwards*, 8 Ves. 46; *Hart v. Ten Eyck*, 2 Johns. Ch. 108; 2 Black. Comm. 405; *Story on Bailm.* § 40; *ante*, § 468; *Bryant v. Ware*, 30 Maine, 237, 295, 370; 2 Black. Comm. 405; 4 Burr. 2349; *Colburn v. Simms*, 2 Hare, 554, cited *at large. post*, § 933, note.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*).

³ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*); *Huddleston v. Huddleston*, 1 Ch. 38; *Park on Dower*, ch. 15, p. 317.

there has, in former times, been no inconsiderable discussion, and some diversity of judgment. But the result of the various decisions upon this subject is, that courts of equity will now entertain a general concurrent jurisdiction with courts of law in the assignment of dower in all cases.¹ The ground most commonly suggested for this result is, that the widow is often much embarrassed, in proceedings upon a writ of dower at the common law, to discover the titles of her deceased husband to the estates out of which she claims her dower (the title-deeds being in the hands of heirs, devisees, or trustees); to ascertain the comparative value of different estates; and to obtain a fair assignment of her third part.² In such cases, where the title of the widow to her dower is not disputed, the court proceeds directly to the assignment of dower; but, if the title is disputed, it is first required to be established by an issue at law, or otherwise.³

§ 625. There are some cases, in which the remedy for dower in equity seems indispensable. At law, if the tenant dies after judgment, and before damages are assessed, the widow loses her damages. And so, if the widow herself dies before the damages are assessed, her personal representative cannot claim any. But a court of equity will, in such cases, entertain a bill for relief; and decree an account of rents and profits, against the respective representatives of the several persons who may have been in possession of the estate since the death of the husband; provided, at the time of filing the bill, the legal right to damages is not gone.⁴

§ 626. Upon principle, there would not seem to be any real difficulty in maintaining the concurrent jurisdiction in courts of

¹ *Curtis v. Curtis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 620; *Mundy v. Mundy*, 2 Ves. Jr. 122; s. c. 4 Bro. Ch. 294; *Blain v. Harrison*, 11 Ill. 388. I am aware that Mr. Park, in his excellent Treatise on Dower, doubts if the doctrine is maintainable to this full extent. But, notwithstanding his doubts, it appears to me the just result of the authorities, and maintainable upon principle. Indeed, Mr. Park seems to admit that where a discovery or account is wanted, there seems no just objection to the jurisdiction. *Park on Dower*, ch. 15, p. 317, 320, 325, 326, 329, 330; *Strickland v. Strickland*, 6 Beav. 77, 81.

² *Mitf. Eq. Pl.* 121, 122, 123, by Jeremy, and note (a); *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 5, p. 508, 509.

³ *Ibid.*; *Park on Dower*, ch. 15, p. 329.

⁴ *Park on Dower*, ch. 15, p. 330; *id.* 309; *Curtis v. Curtis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 632; *Dormer v. Fortescue*, 3 Atk. 130; *Mordaunt v. Thorold*, 3 Lev. 275; 1 *Salk.* 252.

equity in all cases of dower; for a case can scarcely be supposed in which the widow may not want either a discovery of the title-deeds, or of dowable lands; or some impediment to her recovery at law removed; or an account of mesne profits before the assignment of dower; or a more full ascertainment of the relative values of the dowable lands; and, for any of these purposes (independent of cases of accident, mistake, or fraud, or other occasional equities), there seems to be a positive necessity for the assistance of a court of equity.¹ And, if a court of equity has once a just possession of the cause in point of jurisdiction, there seems to be no reason why it should stop short of giving full relief, instead of turning the dowress round to her ultimate remedy at law, which is often dilatory, and always expensive.² Dower is favored, as well in law as in equity.³ And the mere circumstance, that a discovery of any sort may be wanted to enforce the claim, would, under such circumstances, seem to furnish a sufficient reason why the jurisdiction for discovery should carry the jurisdiction for relief.⁴

§ 627. Lord Eldon has put this matter in a strong light. After having remarked, that he did not know any case, in which an heir had claimed, merely as heir, an account (of mesne profits), without stating some impediment to his recovery at law; as, that the defendant has the title-deeds necessary to maintain his title; that terms are in the way of his recovery at law; or other legal impediments, which do, or may probably, prevent it; upon which probability, or upon the fact, the court might found its jurisdiction; he proceeded to say: "The case of the dowress is upon a principle somewhat, and not entirely, analogous to that of the heir. An

¹ The action of dower is now, in consequence of the jurisdiction in equity being established, less frequently resorted to at law than in former times. And the parliamentary commissioners in their report (2 Report of Common Law, p. 7, 1830), say: "The necessity for a discovery to ascertain the state of the legal title before a widow can safely resolve to commence an action against any person as tenant of the freehold, and the convenience of a commission for setting out her dower under the authority of a court of equity, generally make it expedient that a suit in equity should be instituted."

² See Park on Dower, ch. 15, p. 318.

³ Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 E. 1, 2. See *Blain v. Harrison*, 11 Ill. 388.

⁴ See *Dormer v. Fortescue*, 3 Atk. 130, 131; *Moor v. Black*, Cas. Temp. Talb. 126; *Herbert v. Wren*, 7 Cranch. 370, 376; *Curtis v. Curtis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 620; *Mundy v. Mundy*, 2 Ves. Jr. 122; s. c. 4 Bro. Ch. 294; *Graham v. Graham*, 1 Ves. 262; *D'Arcy v. Blake*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 389, 390; *Powell v. The Monson Manuf. Co.*, 3 Mason, 347.

indulgence has been allowed to her case, upon the great difficulty of determining, *à priori*, whether she could recover at law, ignorant of all the circumstances ; and the person, against whom she seeks relief, &c., having in his possession all the information necessary to establish her rights. Therefore, it is considered unconscientious in him to expose her to all that difficulty, to which, if that information was fairly imparted, as conscience and justice require, she could not possibly be exposed.”¹

§ 628. But the propriety of maintaining a general jurisdiction in equity, in matters of dower, is still more fully vindicated in a most elaborate opinion of Lord Alvanley, when Master of the Rolls, in a case which now constitutes the polar star of the doctrine. After adverting to the fact, that dower is a mere legal demand, and the widow’s remedy is at law, he said : “ But then, the question comes, whether the widow cannot come, either for a discovery of those facts, which may enable her to proceed at law ; and, on an allegation of impediments thrown in her way in her proceedings at law, this court has not a right to assume a jurisdiction, to the extent of giving her relief for her dower ; and, if the alleged facts are not positively denied, to give her the full assistance of the court, she being, in conscience as well as at law, entitled to her dower.” He then proceeded to state the reasons why the widow should have the assistance of the court by relief, as well as by recovery ; insisting that the case of the widow is not distinguishable from that of an infant, where the relief would be clearly granted ; and that it would be unconscientious to turn her round to a suit at law, for the recovery of her dower, which must be supposed to be necessary for her to live upon, when she has

¹ Pulteney v. Warren, 6 Ves. 89. See Co. Litt. 208, Butler’s note (105), as to dower in the case of a mortgage for a term of years. Strickland v. Strickland, 6 Beav. 77, 80. In this case Lord Langdale said : “ It was argued that if difficulties are shown to exist, and if, from the nature of the case it appears to be in the power of the defendant to raise those difficulties, this court will not only restrain the defendant from raising the difficulties, but will assume the whole jurisdiction over the case ; and if this were so, the plaintiff might be entitled to relief on this bill. But there is no such general rule ; there are, indeed, some particular cases of legal right, such as dower and partition, in which the court has assumed a general jurisdiction, probably in consequence of the difficulties to which the plaintiff would be subjected in seeking to obtain complete justice at law ; but, in other cases, the plaintiff is to show what the difficulties are, and how they impede him in a manner contrary to equity, and his bill ought to pray to be relieved from them.”

been compelled to resort to equity for a discovery. And he finally concluded by saying, that the widow labors under so many disadvantages at law, that she is fully entitled to every assistance that this court can give her, not only in paving the way for her to establish her right at law, but also by giving complete relief when the right is ascertained.¹

¹ *Curtis v. Curtis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 620, 630 to 634. The judgment of the Master of the Rolls contains so masterly a view of the doctrine, that I venture to transcribe the material passages, as they cannot be abridged without injury to their force. "Dower, therefore, is a mere legal demand, and the widow's remedy is *prima facie* at law. But, then, the question comes, whether the widow cannot come, either for a discovery of those facts which may enable her to proceed at law; and, on an allegation of impediments thrown in her way in her proceedings at law, this court has not a right to assume a jurisdiction, to the extent of giving her relief for her dower, and if the alleged facts are not positively denied, to give her the full assistance of this court, she being, in conscience as well as at law, entitled to her dower. Her remedy at law is a writ of dower. Generally, there are no damages in real actions; but so favorable was the law to this particular action, that it provided a special relief for the widow, by giving her damages. If the widow was disturbed in her quarantine, she had a particular writ penned for her relief. As to dower, the widow, at first, was only entitled to have an assignment of the land by metes and bounds. Then came the statute of Merton, which showed particular anxiety for the relief of widows. And it is curious to see that the attempt now is to drive the widow to that remedy, as the least advantageous, though it is very evident, the statute was meant to give her an additional remedy. The deforcers of dower are (by that statute) to be in mercy, or fined at the pleasure of the king, which, in those days, was a very serious thing, and was meant as a real punishment to deforcers. I own, I think it an odd construction of this statute, that the damages given by it are to be considered strictly as damages, that is, as vindictive damages in the breast of a jury, and not capable of ascertainment by the court, and that, therefore, they are to die with the person. However, so it has been determined. As to what is said in Sayer's Law of Damages, that a widow shall have no damages, when her dower is assigned to her in chancery, it certainly is a mistake of the meaning of Co. Litt. 33 a; for Coke is there speaking of the writ *de Dote assignanda* issued by the Court of Chancery, and not a decree of a court of equity. In Fitzherbert's *Natura Brevium*, the nature of the writ *de Dote assignanda* appears very clear; and on this there are no damages, because there is no forfeiture of the widow, who is put to no trouble, but has a summary remedy provided for her. Now, as to the cases which have been cited, *Hutton v. Simpson*, 2 Vern. 722, does not seem to bear much upon this case. *Tilley v. Bridges*, Prec. Ch. 252, is also reported in 2 Vern. 519; and I have some doubt about the authority of that case, for it is more particularly stated in Vernon than in Prec. Ch.; and yet, what is said in Vernon, as to the injunction not preventing the entry, certainly cannot be right. *Duke of Bolton v. Deane*, *Norton v. Frecker*, and other cases, have been mentioned, to show that there must be some fraud to give this court a jurisdiction, and that in the

§ 629. Dower, as has been already suggested, is highly favored in equity. And, as was said by the Master of the Rolls (Sir simple case of a widow claiming her dower no such jurisdiction exists. *Dormer v. Fortescue* is also brought to show, that there must either be an infant concerned, or some particular circumstances in the case, to entitle this court to proceed. Now, it seems difficult to distinguish the two cases of the infant and the widow. The principle in the case of the infant is, that he is thought not consultant of his rights at law sufficiently to enable him to proceed there; and therefore the Court of Equity will give him all the relief he could have at law, and something more; for, on a bill by an infant for an account, he will get the mesne profits, which would certainly be gone at law by the death of the party. I argue in the same manner for the widow. She comes here and says, 'The law gives me dower out of the estates of my husband and the mesne profits from his death; I do not know how to proceed; for if there should turn out to be any mortgage, or term of years, in my way, then I must pay the costs. The defendant has all the title-deeds in his hands, and knows what the estates are; his conscience is affected; and yet, instead of putting me in possession of my rights, he turns me out of doors, and keeps all the title-deeds.' Now, I think this argument is a strong one, on the subject of fraud and concealment on the part of the heir, in not informing the widow of all that is necessary to enable her to proceed safely at law. If, then, she comes here for a discovery of these matters, which the heir withholds from her, she shall have her complete relief in this court. If you deny her right to dower, the question must be tried at law; but, when the fact is ascertained, she shall have her relief here. It must be supposed, the dowress has nothing to live upon but her dower, and the mesne profits are her subsistence from the time of her husband's death; and the course of this court seems, therefore, to have been to assign her dower, and universally to give her an account from the death of her husband. I admit she has no costs, where the heir has thrown no difficulties in her way; and, if the heir admits the widow's case, he is safe. I wished to find, if I could, any instance of the widow's being turned round on such a case as this; but, verily, I believe there is no such instance. And, indeed, the case of *Moor v. Black* (Cas. Temp. Talb. 126), is pretty clear to show, that Lord Talbot thought the widow's claim to be rightly made here; for he overruled the demurrer in that case on both points. It shows that the difficulty, under which a widow labors, is a reason for her coming here. *Delver v. Hunter* does not govern this case; for there the widow had recovered possession. *Lucas v. Calcraft* has also been mentioned, as showing that this court would give no other relief as to dower, than such as the law would give the widow, and that the Lord Chancellor had refused to give costs in that case, because no costs were given at law. But, in that case, the heir had thrown no impediment in the widow's way, and, therefore, there were no costs on either side. Now, taking it for granted, that the widow, coming after the death of the heir, would not be entitled to her mesne profits, it by no means follows, that when the widow is right in this court, but the heir happens to die before she has fully established her right, she is not entitled to her mesne profits; for unquestionably, if the heir, instead of contesting the widow's right, had admitted it, she would have been entitled to her decree for mesne profits, and his having thrown an impediment in her way shall not make

Thomas Trever), on one occasion, the right that a dowress has to her dower, is not only a legal right, and so adjudged at law; but the difference. At the same time, I must again admit that the widow's right at law is gone by the death of the party. *Mordaunt v. Thorold* is principally relied upon as to this point. It has been cited from Salkeld, tit. *Dower*; but it is also reported in 3 Lev. 275, and the result is stated differently in the latter book, though the state of the case seems copied from the other; for in Levinz it is said the court inclined to that opinion, but it being a new case, they would advise, and no decision was given; and it is to be observed that Levinz was himself counsel in that case. *Aleworth v. Roberts*, 1 Lev. 38, is mentioned in the former case; there the action was against the heir of the heir and the alienee of the heir, and not against the heir's executor; and the ground of that case was, that neither the heir nor the alienee were deforcers, and the damages were not a lien upon the land; and, then the distinction is taken between the cases of tithes and dower; that, in the first case, the damages were certain; in dower, uncertain. But surely, in common sense, they are equally certain. If it were not for the case of *Mordaunt v. Thorold*, I really should have doubted much the construction of this statute. I should have thought that the damages given by the statute were certain, and were not arbitrary, uncertain damages, to be ascertained by the discretion of a jury. However, it does seem a settled point at law, and that, at law the widow could not have recovered against the executor of Thomas Curtis. This being so, it is insisted, on the part of the widow, that still she has a right to come here for full relief, and that she ought to be in the same situation, as if the heir had admitted her claim at first (and, to be sure, in this case, the heir has given every opposition to her claim that he possibly could); and that, in this and many other cases, this court gives a further remedy than the law will do. It is true, where the law gives neither right nor remedy, however hard it may be, equity cannot assist. So in the case of damages for a personal injury, which arises *ex delicto* and not *ex contractu*, they are gone with the person. But it is not so clear in the case of a demand, the recovery of which has been prevented by a difficulty, unconscientiously thrown in the way of another person. There, equity will give relief, and the relief it gives is beyond that which the party could obtain at law. It is the practice in equity, that bond-creditors, coming for a distribution of assets, shall have an account of rents and profits which they could not have at law. And yet the same argument might be used against that additional relief, as has been used in this case. The law gives the creditor only the land to hold, until he is satisfied. Equity goes further and says, if the remedy at law is not sufficient, we will sell the inheritance of the estate, and if that will not do, we will direct an account of rents and profits against the heir. *Dormer v. Fortescue* certainly supports these ideas very strongly, though, I am sure, Lord Hardwicke's words must have been misconceived by Mr. Atkyns, as to what he was supposed to have said in respect of the time, from which the statute of 9 Henry III. gives the widow damages. But as far as one can collect Lord Hardwicke's sentiments from that case, he thought this court would expect the widow to establish her title at law, but, she having so done, would give her relief here as to the mesne profits. That is saying, Let the widow bring her action at law, out of form, for the purpose of determining her title to dower, and, when she has done that, we will give

it is also a moral right to be provided for, and have a maintenance and sustenance out of her husband's estate to live upon. She is, therefore, in the care of the law, and a favorite of the law. And upon this moral law is the law of England founded, as to the right of dower.¹ So much is this the case, that the widow will be aided in equity for her dower against a term of years, which attends the inheritance, if it is not the case of a purchaser against whom she claims.² And if she has recovered her dower against an heir, who is an infant, and there is a term to protect the inheritance, which, by the neglect of his guardian, is not pleaded, the term will not be allowed in equity to be set up against her.³

§ 630. Indeed, so highly favored is dower, that a bill for a discovery and relief has been maintained, even against a purchaser, for a valuable consideration without notice, who is, perhaps, generally as much favored as any one in courts of equity.⁴ The ground of maintaining the bill, in such a case, is, that the suit for dower is upon a legal title, and not upon a mere equitable claim, to which only the plea of a purchase for a valuable consideration has been supposed properly to apply.⁵ This decision has been often found

her an adequate remedy. Here, I confess, I agree most fully in thinking, that the widow labors under so many disadvantages at law, from the embarrassments of trust terms, &c., that she is fully entitled to every assistance that this court can give her, not only in paving the way for her to establish her right at law, but also by giving complete relief, when the right is ascertained." *Curtis v. Curtis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 630 to 634; *Strickland v. Strickland*, 6 Beav. 77.

¹ *Dudley & Ward v. Dudley*, Prec. Ch. 244; *Banks v. Sutton*, 2 P. Will. 703, 704. See Co. Litt. 208, Butler's note (105), when the widow is entitled to dower in case of a mortgage of the estate for years.

² Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 E. 1; *Radnor v. Vandebendy*, 1 Vern. 356; s. c. 2 Ch. Cas. 172; Prec. Ch. 65; 1 Eq. Abridg. 219; *Dudley v. Dudley*, 1 Eq. Abridg. 219; *D'Arcy v. Blake*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 389, 390; *Mole v. Smith*, 1 Jac. 496, 497.

³ Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 E. 1; *Wray v. Williams*, Prec. Ch. 151; s. c. 1 Eq. Abridg. 219; 1 P. Will. 137; 2 Vern. 378, and Mr. Cox's note; *Dudley & Ward v. Dudley*, Prec. Ch. 241; *Banks v. Sutton*, 2 P. Will. 706, 707, 708; *D'Arcy v. Blake*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 389, 390; *Swannock v. Lyford*, Ambl. 6, 7; *Hitchins v. Hitchins*, 2 Freem. 242.

⁴ *Ante*, § 64 c, 108, 139, 163, 381, 409, 434, 436.

⁵ *Williams v. Lambe*, 3 Bro. Ch. 264. In *Collins v. Archer*, 1 Russ. & Mylne, 284, Sir John Leach, following the case of *Williams v. Lambe*, held, that a purchaser for a valuable consideration without notice had no defence in equity against a plaintiff relying upon a legal title. But in *Payne v. Compton*, 2 Younge & Coll. 457, 461, Lord Abinger seems to have thought, that such a purchaser

fault with, and, in some cases, the doctrine of it denied. It has, however, been vindicated, with great apparent force, upon the following reasoning. It is admitted, that dower is a mere legal right; and that a court of equity, in assuming a concurrent jurisdiction with courts of law upon the subject, professedly acts upon the legal right;¹ for dower does not attach upon an equitable estate. In so acting, the court should proceed in analogy to the law, where such a plea, of a purchase for a valuable consideration without notice, would not be looked at; and, therefore, as an equitable plea, it should also be inadmissible. But this analogy will not hold, where the widow applies for equitable relief, as, for the removal of terms out of her way, or for a discovery. In the latter cases, the equitable plea, of a purchase for a valuable consideration without notice, cannot be resisted. In the former case, the widow, proceeding upon the concurrent jurisdiction of the court, merely enforces a right, which the defendant cannot at law resist by such a mode of defence. In the latter case, she applies to the equity of the court to take away from him a defence, which, at law, would protect him against her demand.²

§ 631. Other learned minds have, however, arrived at a different conclusion; and have insisted, that, upon principle, the plea of a purchase for a valuable consideration without notice, is a good plea in all cases against a legal, as well as against an equitable claim; and that dower constitutes no just exception from the doctrine. They put themselves upon the general principle of conscience and equity, upon which such a plea must always stand; that such a purchaser has an equal right to protection and support as any other claimant; and that he has a right to say, that, having *bonâ fide* and honestly paid his money, no person has a right to require him to discover any facts which shall show any infirmity in his title. The general correctness of the argument cannot be doubted; and the only recognized exception seems to be that of dower, if that can be deemed a fixed exception.³

would be protected in equity against any claim by the owner of the legal estate. Neither of these cases was a claim of dower by the plaintiff.

¹ See *Blain v. Harrison*, 11 Illinois, . 88.

² 1 *Roper on Husband and Wife*, 446, 447; *ante*, § 57 *a*, 410, note, § 434, 436; *Williams v. Lambe*, 3 Bro. Ch. 264; *Collins v. Archer*, 1 Russ. & Mylne, 284.

³ The authorities are both ways. The case of *Williams v. Lambe*, 3 Bro. Ch. 264; *Collins v. Archer*, 1 Russ. & Mylne, 284; and *Rogers v. Seale*, 2 Freem. 84, are in favor of the doctrine, that the plea is not good against a legal title.

§ 632. Generally speaking, in America, fewer cases occur in regard to dower, in which the aid of a court of equity is wanted, than in England, from the greater simplicity of our titles and the rareness of family settlements, and the general distribution of property among all the descendants, in equal or in nearly equal proportions. Still, however, cases do occur, in which a resort to equity is found to be highly convenient, and sometimes indispensable. Thus, for instance, if the lands, of which dower is sought, are undivided, the husband being a tenant in common, and a partition, or an account, or a discovery, is necessary, the remedy in equity is peculiarly appropriate and easy.¹ So, where the lands are in the hands of various purchasers; or their relative values are not easily ascertainable; as, for instance, if they have become the site of a flourishing manufacturing establishment; or if the right is affected with numerous or conflicting equities [as where mortgages exist, in which the widow has released dower];² in such cases, the jurisdiction of a court of equity is, perhaps, the only adequate remedy.³

[§ 632 *a.* Questions sometimes arise in courts of equity, in re-

Against it is the decision in *Burlace v. Cooke*, 2 Freeman, 24; *Parker v. Blythmore*, 2 Eq. Abridg. 79, Pl. 1; *Jerrard v. Saunders*, 2 Ves. Jr. 454, and *Payne v. Compton*, 2 Younge & Coll. 457, 461; *Blain v. Harrison*, 11 Illinois, 384; *ante*, § 630, note (5). Mr. Sugden, in a very late edition of his work on Vendors and Purchasers, ch. 18, p. 762, 763 (1826), maintains, that the authorities in favor of the sufficiency of the plea against a legal title preponderate; and that, therefore, we may venture to assert, that it will protect the purchaser against a legal as well as against an equitable claim. On the other hand, Mr. Beames, Mr. Belt, and Mr. Roper, maintain the opposite doctrine. *Beam. Eq. Pl.* 234, 245; 3 *Bro. Ch.* 264, Belt's note (1); 1 *Roper on Husband and Wife*, 446, 447. See also *Medlicott v. O'Donnell*, 1 *Ball & Beatt.* 171; *Mitford, Eq. Pl.* 274, by Jeremy, and note (*d*); 2 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 2, ch. 6, § 2, note (*h*); 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 1, ch. 4, § 25, and note. In a case of such conflict of learned opinions, a commentator's duty is best performed by leaving the authorities for the reader's own judgment. See *Park on Dower*, ch. 15, p. 327, 328, and the Reporter's note to 1 *Russ. & Mylne*, 289, n.

¹ *Herbert v. Wren*, 7 *Cranch*, 370, 376.

² *Gibson v. Crehore*, 5 *Pick.* 146; *Messiter v. Wright*, 16 *Pick.* 151; *Smith v. Eustis*, 7 *Greenl.* (Bennett's edit.) 41.

³ *Powell v. Monson Manufacturing Company*, 3 *Mason*, 347; *id.* 459; *Swaine v. Perrinc*, 5 *Johns. Ch.* 482; *Badgley v. Bruce*, 4 *Paige, Ch.* 98. [* The question of adjusting claims of dower in courts of equity, and especially in cases of mortgage by the husband of the dowress, where the mortgage has been paid off by the assignee of the mortgagor, is considerably discussed in late cases in New Jersey. *Chiswell v. Morris*, 1 *McCarter*, 101; *Eldridge v. Eldridge*, 1 *McCarter*, 195.

gard to a provision for the wife, being a satisfaction of her claim for dower. This construction is not favored by the courts, and, in order to put her to the election between a bequest in the will of her husband and dower, there must be some express declaration of the husband, to the effect, that the provision is intended in lieu of dower, or it must appear, by clear implication, that such was his intention.¹

§ 632 b. And where by an antenuptial agreement between husband and wife, the husband stipulated a certain settlement upon the wife, which she agreed to accept in lieu of dower; a portion of the funds stipulated in the settlement had been conveyed to the trustees, and only a portion, and no excuse was shown for the delay, which extended over a period of ten years, the court declined to enforce the contract against the widow.²]

CHAPTER XIII.

MARSHALLING OF SECURITIES.

§ 633, 634, 642. Marshalling securities is compelling him who has two means of indemnity to rely upon one, where that will aid another, without injuring him.

§ 635, 636. This doctrine is derived from the subrogation of the civil law.

§ 637. Exposition of Lord Kames.

§ 638, 639. Equity intervenes in this way between sureties and creditors.

§ 640. But not between the debtor and his creditor.

§ 641. By the civil law the surety might compel the creditor to sue the debtor, who was wasting his estate.

§ 643. Courts of equity will only marshal securities against the same debtor.

§ 644. And will not intervene for the advantage of one party only.

§ 645. Recapitulation of the principles laid down.

§ 645 a. Statement of points decided in recent cases.

¹ *Norris v. Clark*, 2 Stockton, Ch. 51; *Mills v. Mills*, 28 Barb. 454.

² *Sullings v. Sullings*, 9 Allen, 234. Where land is purchased by the husband during the coverture, and mortgaged back to secure a portion of the purchase money, the widow's dower is subject to such mortgage, and she may pay the whole mortgage and hold it upon the whole land until the other parties interested pay their proportion of the mortgage. *Wing v. Ayer*, 53 Me. 138. The right of the widow to dower in the husband's equity of redemption in mortgaged premises, is here largely discussed, as well as the mode of reaching the same in courts of equity.]

§ 633. ANOTHER head of concurrent jurisdiction, in courts of equity, is that of MARSHALLING SECURITIES.¹ We have already had occasion, in another place, to consider the topic of marshalling assets in cases of administration, to which the present bears very close analogy; and also the doctrine of apportionment and contribution between sureties, to which it also has a near relation. The general principle is, that, if one party has a lien on, or interest in, two funds, for a debt, and another party has a lien on, or interest in one only of the funds, for another debt, the latter has a right in equity to compel the former to resort to the other fund, in the first instance, for satisfaction, if that course is necessary for the satisfaction of the claims of both parties,² whenever it will not trench upon the rights, or operate to the prejudice, of the party entitled to the double fund. Thus, a mortgagee, who has two funds, as against the other specialty creditors, who have but one fund, will, in the case of the death of the mortgagor and the administration of his assets, be compelled to resort first to the mortgage security; and will be allowed to claim against the common fund only what the mortgage, on a sale consented to by him, is deficient to pay.³ So, if A. has a mortgage upon two different estates for the same debt, and B. has a mortgage upon one only of the estates for another debt, B. has a right to throw A., in the first instance, for satisfaction upon the security, which he, B., cannot touch; at least, where it will not prejudice A.'s rights, or improperly control his remedies.⁴ The reason is obvious, and has been already stated; for by com-

¹ See *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 394; 2 *White & Tudor's Eq. Lead. Cases*, 49 and notes; *Eden on Injunct.* ch. 2, p. 38, 39, 40; *ante*, § 499, 558, 559, 560; *post*, § 662.

² *Lanoy v. Duke of Athol*, 2 Atk. 446; *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 388, 395, 396; *Ex parte Kendall*, 17 Ves. 520; *Trimmer v. Bayne*, 9 Ves. 209; *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 413; *Averall v. Wade, Lloyd & Goold*, 252; *Gwynne v. Edwards*, 2 Russ. 289; *Cradock v. Piper*, 15 Sim. 301; *Attorney General v. Tyndal, Ambler*, 614; *Selby v. Selby*, 4 Russ. 336, 341; *Trimmer v. Bayne*, 9 Ves. 209; *Greenwood v. Taylor*, 1 Russ. & Mylne, 185; 2 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 3*, ch. 2, § 6; *ante*, § 557, 558, 559, 560; *post*, § 642; *Wiggin v. Dorr*, 3 *Sumner*, 410, 414.

³ *Greenwood v. Taylor*, 1 Russ. & Mylne, 185, 187.

⁴ *Ibid.*; *ante*, § 499, 558, 559, 560; *Barnes v. Rackster*, 1 *Younge & Coll. New R.* 401; *The York and Jersey Steam, &c. Company v. Associates of the Jersey Company, Hopkins*, Ch. 460; *post*, § 642; *United States v. Duncan*, 12 *Ill.* 523; *Wise v. Shepherd*, 13 *id.* 41; *United States Insurance Co. v. Shriever*, 3 *Md. Ch. Decisions*, 381; *Conrad v. Harrison*, 3 *Leigh*, 532.

elling A., under such circumstances, to take satisfaction out of one of the funds, no injustice is done to him in point of security or payment. But it is the only way by which B. can receive payment. And natural justice requires, that one man should not be permitted, from wantonness, or caprice, or rashness, to do an injury to another.³

¹ Lord-Chancellor Sugden, in *Averall v. Wade* (Lloyd & Goold, 255), expressed an opinion which may be thought to imply a doubt, whether the doctrine did apply to the case of two mortgages. His language was: "The general doctrine is this. Where one creditor has a demand against two estates, and another a demand against one only, the latter is entitled to throw the former on the fund that is not common to both. This is a narrow doctrine, and cannot generally be enforced against an encumbrancer, who is a mortgagee. Whatever may be the equity of the creditor with only one security, the mortgagee of both estates has a right to compel the debtor to redeem, or he may foreclose." On the other hand, Lord Hardwicke, in *Lanoy v. The Duke of Athol*, 2 Atk. 446, said: "Suppose a person, who has two real estates, mortgages both to one person, and afterwards only one estate to a second mortgagee, who had no notice of the first; the court, in order to relieve the second mortgagee, have directed the first to take his satisfaction out of that estate only which is not in mortgage to the second mortgagee, if that is sufficient to satisfy the first mortgage, in order to make room for the second mortgagee, even though the estates descended to two different persons." See also *In re Cornwall*, 2 C. & L. 131; s. c. 3 Dru. & War. 173. Lord Eldon, in *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 388, used language leading to the same conclusion as that of Lord Hardwicke. He said: "Suppose there was no freehold estate, but there was a copyhold estate; which the owner had subjected to a mortgage, and died. It is clear, the mortgagee having two funds might, if he pleased, resort to the copyhold estate. But would this court compel him to resort to it? If so, the court marshals by the necessary consequence of its act. If the court would not compel him, is it not clear that it is purely matter of his will, whether the simple contract creditors shall be paid, or not? That, at least, contradicts all the authorities, that, if a party has two funds (not applying now to assets particularly), a person having an interest in one only has a right in equity to compel the former to resort to the other, if that is necessary for the satisfaction of both. I never understood, that, if A. has two mortgages, and B. has one, the right of B. to throw A. upon the security which B. cannot touch, depends upon the circumstance, whether it is a freehold or a copyhold mortgage. It does not depend upon assets only; a species of marshalling being applied in other cases; though, technically, we do not apply that term except to assets. So, where in bankruptcy, the Crown by extent laying hold of all the property, even against creditors, the Crown has been confined to such property as would leave the securities of encumbrances effectual. So, in the case of the surety, it is not by the force of the contract; but that equity, upon which it is considered against conscience, that the holder of the securities should use them to the prejudice of the surety; and therefore there is nothing hard in the act of the court, placing the surety exactly in the situation of the creditor. So, a surety may have the benefit of a mortgage of a copyhold

In short, we may here apply the common civil maxim, "Sic utere tuo, ut alienum non lædas;" and still more emphatically, the estate, exactly as of freehold. It is very difficult to reconcile this with the principle of all those cases between living persons." And again: "Suppose another case: Two estates mortgaged to A., and one of them mortgaged to B. He has no claim under the deed, upon the other estate. It may be so constructed, that he could not affect that estate after the death of the mortgagor. But it is the ordinary case to say, a person, having two funds, shall not by his election disappoint the party having only one fund; and equity, to satisfy both, will throw him who has two funds, upon that which can be affected by him only to the intent that the only fund, to which the other has access, may remain clear to him. This has been carried to a great extent in bankruptcy; for a mortgagee whose interest in the estate was affected by an extent of the Crown, has found his way, even in a question with the general creditors to his relief; that he was held entitled to stand in the place of the Crown as to those securities, which he could not effect *per directum*, because the Crown affected those in pledge to him. Another case may be put; that a man died, having no fund but a freehold and a copyhold estate; that they were both comprehended in a mortgage to A.; and the freehold estate only was mortgaged to B.; and that B. was not only a mortgagee of the freehold estate, but also a special creditor by a covenant or a bond. In that case as well as in this, it might be said, the mortgagee of both estates might, if he thought proper, apply to the freehold estate, and exhaust the whole value of it. The other would then stand as a naked specialty creditor; the fund being taken out of his reach; and there is no doubt, that, being both a specialty creditor and a mortgagee of the freehold estate, but not having any claim as a mortgagee upon the copyhold estate, the same arrangement would take place, that he in equity shall throw the prior encumbrancer upon the estate to which the other has no resort." Mr. Powell, in his Treatise on Mortgages (1 Powell on Mortg. 343, and Coventry & Rand's notes, id. 1014), and Mr. Fonblanque (2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 6, note i), seem to have taken the same view. It may perhaps be true, that the doctrine propounded by Lord-Chancellor Sugden was intended to be applied only to cases where there could be a sale of the mortgaged property, either by the original contract, or by a decree of a court of equity, in the exercise of its appropriate jurisdiction; and not to reach cases, where, as in England, the mortgagee had a right to, and might insist upon a foreclosure (*post*, 2 Story, Eq. Jurispr. § 1026). But such a qualification of the doctrine is not intimated, as far as I have seen, except in the case before Lord-Chancellor Sugden. In the late case of *Barnes v. Rackster* (1 Younge & Coll. New R. 401, 403), Mr. Vice-Chancellor Bruce seems to have thought the doctrine of Mr. Sugden to be applicable to the case, where, after the first mortgage of two estates, there are distinct mortgages to different persons of each estate mortgaged to the first mortgagee; and that as between these last conflicting encumbrancers, courts of equity will not marshal the estates, but merely apportion the first charge between the two estates. It may be thought that a court of equity would be going too far by interfering with the creditor's right of foreclosure; and that it would be sufficient to give the second mortgagee a right to redeem the first mortgage. In America, there has hitherto been no difficulty on the part of our courts of equity

Christian maxim, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you."¹

to give full effect to the doctrine of Lord Hardwicke, in the case of two funds, and two successive mortgages. Instead of a foreclosure, the usual course is to decree a sale, as it is in Ireland; so that the main difficulty, in narrowing the rights of the first mortgagee, is avoided. See *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 413; *Stevens v. Cooper*, 1 Johns. Ch. 425; *Evertson v. Booth*, 19 Johns. 486; *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 123; *Campbell v. Maccomb*, 4 Johns. Ch. 534; *Conrad v. Harrison*, 3 Leigh, 532; 1 Powell on Mortg. 343, and notes by Coventry & Rand. But, at all events, it is very certain, that wherever a creditor, by his election to take one of two funds, to which alone another creditor has the right to resort, deprives the latter of his claim to that fund, he will be permitted in equity to stand in the place of that creditor in regard to the other fund. In *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 396, Lord Eldon referred to many cases of this sort, and, among other things, said: "The cases with respect to creditors and other classes of claimants, go exactly the same length. In the cases of legatees against assets descended, a legatee has not so strong a claim to this species of equity as a creditor. But the mere bounty of the testator enables the legatee to call for this species of marshalling; that, if those creditors, having a right to go to the real estate descended, will go to the personal estate the choice of the creditors shall not determine whether the legatees shall be paid or not. That, in some measure, is upon the doctrine of assets; but with relation to the fact of a double fund. Both are in law liable to the creditors; and therefore, by making the option to go against the one, they shall not disappoint another person, who the testator intended should be satisfied. That is not so strong as where it is not bounty, but the party has by his own act, in his life, made liable to the whole of the debt a copyhold estate, not in law liable; and who, having also a freehold estate, must be understood to mean, that the freehold estate shall be liable according to law, to his specialty debts. The case is exactly the same with reference to the distinction taken, that where lands are specifically devised, the legatees shall not stand in the place of the creditors against the devisees; for that is upon the supposition, that there is in the will as strong an inclination of the testator in favor of a specific devisee as a pecuniary legatee; and, therefore, there shall be no marshalling. But if, though specifically devised, the land is made subject to all debts, that distinguishes the case; for there is a double fund; and as, by that denotation of intention, the creditor has a double fund, the land devised and the personal estate, he shall not disappoint the legatee. The case is also the same where, instead of the case of a mere specialty creditor, the land specifically devised is subject to a mortgage by the testator; as in *Lutkins v. Leigh*; there he shall not disappoint the legatee. So the case of paraphernalia is very strong for this proposition; that wherever there is a double fund, though this court will not restrain the party, yet he shall not so operate his payment as to disappoint another claim, whether arising by the law, or by the act of the tes-

¹ See *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 413; *Evertson v. Booth*, 19 Johns. 486; *Hays v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 123; *Wiggin v. Dorr*, 3 Sumner, 410.

§ 634. The same principle applies to one judgment creditor, who has a right to go upon two funds, and another judgment creditor, who has a right upon one only of them, both belonging to the same debtor. The former may be compelled to apply first to the fund which cannot be reached by the second judgment; so that both judgments may be satisfied.¹ But if the first creditor has a judgment against A. and B., and the second against B. only; and it does not appear whether A. or B. ought to pay the debt due to the first creditor; nor whether any equitable right exists in B. to have the debt charged on A. alone; in such a case, equity will not compel the creditor first to take the land of A. in satisfaction; for it is not (as we shall presently and more fully see) a case of different debts and securities against one common debtor.²

§ 634 a. Another case may easily be put, to illustrate the general doctrine, and the exceptions to it. Suppose the mortgagor to mortgage two estates to the mortgagee, and afterwards he should mortgage one of the estates to B. and the other to C., by distinct mortgages, and B. and C. should each have knowledge of the first mortgage, and C. should also have notice of B.'s mortgage at the time of taking his own; and the mortgaged estates should finally turn out not to be sufficient to pay all the three mortgages; in such a case, it would seem, that B. would not have any right to have the estates marshalled, so as to throw

tator." *Ante*, § 558, 559, 560 to 578. See also the Reporter's note to *Averall v. Wade*, Lloyd & Gould, 264, and especially p. 268, where they say: "The general principle of marshalling is, that where one claimant has two funds to resort to, and another only one, the court will either compel the person having the double security, to resort to that fund not liable to the demand of the other (citing 2 Atk. 446, 8 Ves. 391, 395, and 1 Russ. & Mylne, 187); or, if satisfaction has been already obtained by him who has the double security, out of the fund to which alone the other can resort, the court will allow the latter claimant to stand in the place of the former *pro tanto*." See the note to *Clifton v. Burt* (by Cox), 1 P. Will. 679, where the principal authorities are collected. *Ante*, § 561, note (1).

¹ *Dorr v. Shaw*, 4 Johns. Ch. 17; *Averall v. Wade*, Lloyd & Gould, 252. In this last case, Lord-Chancellor Sugden decided, that where a party seised of several estates, and indebted by judgment, settled one of the estates for a valuable consideration, with a covenant against encumbrances, and subsequently acknowledged other judgments, the prior judgments should be thrown altogether upon the unsettled estates, and that the subsequent judgment creditors had no right to make the settled estate contribute.

² *Dorr v. Shaw*, 4 Johns. Ch. 17; *post*, § 642, 643. See *Ayers v. Husted*, 15 Conn. 504; *King v. McVicker*, 3 Sandf. Ch. 192; *Wise v. Shepherd*, 13 Illinois, 41.

the whole charge upon the estate mortgaged to B., for he has no superior equity to C., and, therefore, the charge of the first mortgage ought to be ratably apportioned between B. and C.¹ But this must be propounded as open to some doubt, as there is a conflict in the authorities.²

§ 635. It is not improbable, that this doctrine of marshalling securities or funds, which, under another form, had its existence in the Roman law, and was therein called subrogation or substitution, was derived into the jurisprudence of equity from that source, as it might well be, since it is a doctrine belonging to an age of enlightened policy, and refined, although natural, justice. In the Roman law (as we have already seen), a surety upon a bond or security, paying it to the creditor, was entitled to a cession of the debt and a subrogation or substitution to all the rights and actions of the creditor against the debtor; and the security was treated, as between the surety and the debtor, as still subsisting and unextinguished.³ And where one creditor had any hypothecation or privilege upon property, as security for a debt, and another creditor had a like subsequent security upon the same property for another debt; there, the latter upon payment of the prior debt to the prior creditor, was entitled to a cession of the property, and to a subrogation to all the rights and actions of the same creditor for that debt. So the doctrine is laid down in the Digest. "Plane, cum tertius creditor primum de sua pecunia dimisit, in locum ejus substituitur in ea quantitate, quam superiori exsolvit."⁴

¹ *Barnes v. Rackster*, 1 Younge & Coll. New R. 401. [See *Bugden v. Bignold*, 2 Younge & Coll. C. C. 377; *Bowker v. Bull*, 1 Eng. Law & Eq. 126. In the last case a principal and surety having joined in a mortgage of land and bonds, containing powers of sale, and a proviso, that between the principal and surety, the principal and the land should be primarily liable for the debt, the principal afterwards again mortgaged the same land and bonds, without the surety's knowledge, to secure a further advance. The surety was allowed to redeem on payment of only the first sum. See also *Higgins v. Frankis*, 10 Jur. 328.]

² *Post*, § 1233 a; *Barnes v. Rackster*, 1 Younge & Coll. New R. 401; *Gouverneur v. Lynch*, 2 Paige, 300; *Skeel v. Spraker*, 8 Paige, 182; *Patty v. Pease*, 8 Paige, 277; *Schryver v. Teller*, 9 Paige, 173.

³ *Ante*, § 494, 499, 500, 501. Pothier, on Oblig. by Evans, n. 275, 280, 281; *id.* n. 428, 429, 430; *id.* n. 556, 557, 558, 559 (n. 591, 592, 593, 594, of the French editions); 1 Domat, Civ. Law, B. 3, tit. 1, § 6, per tot. p. 377, 378, 379; 2 Voet, ad Pand. Lib. 46, tit. 1, § 27, 28, 29, 30; *ante*, § 494, 499, 500.

⁴ Dig. Lib. 20, tit. 4, l. 16, 17, l. 11, § 4, l. 12, § 9. See also 1 Domat, B. 3, tit. 1, § 6, art. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8.

§ 636. We here see the original elements from which our present system of equitable relief is, or at least might have been, derived. The principal difference between the Roman system and ours is, that our courts of equity arrive directly at the same result, by compelling the first creditor to resort to the fund, over which he has a complete control, for satisfaction of his debt; and the Roman system substituted the second creditor to the rights of the first, by a cession thereof upon his payment of the debt. It is true, that the case of a double fund is not put in the text of the civil law; but it is an irresistible inference from the principles upon which it is founded.¹

§ 637. Lord Kames has put the very case, as founded in a clear and indisputable principle of natural equity. After having adverted to the cases of sureties (*fidejussores*), and *correi debendi* (debtors bound jointly and severally to the same creditor),² he proceeds to state: "Another connection, of the same nature with the former,

¹ See Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, n. 520, 521, 522 (n. 555, 556, 557, of the French editions), B.; *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 130 to 132; *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 414. There are three texts of the civil law pointing to cases of hypothecations or mortgages, which bear upon the subject. In the Code it is said: *Non omnino succedunt in locum hypothecarii creditoris hi, quorum pecunia ad creditorem transit. Hoc enim tunc observatur; cum is, qui pecuniam postea dat, sub hoc pacto credat, ut idem pignus ei obligetur, et in locum ejus succedat. Quod cum in persona tua factum non sit (judicatum est enim te pignora non accepisse), frustra putas tibi auxilio opus esse Constitutionis nostræ ad eam rem pertinentis. And again: Si potiores creditores pecunia tua dimissi sunt, quibus obligata fuit possessio, quam emisse te dicis, ita ut pretium perveniret ad eosdem priores creditores, in jus eorum successisti; et contra eos, qui inferiores illis fuerunt, justa defensione te tueri potes. And again: Si prior Respublica contraxit, fundusque ei est obligatus, tibi secundo creditori offerenti pecuniam potestas est, ut succedas etiam in jus Reipublicæ. Cod. Lib. 8, tit. 19, l. 1, 3, 4. Pothier has expounded the sense of these passages with admirable clearness. Pothier on Oblig. by Evans, n. 521, B. (3) (n. 556 of the French editions). Domat, B. 3, tit. 1, § 3, art. 6, says: "Although the creditor who has a mortgage, whether general or special, may exercise his right on all lands and tenements that are subject to the mortgage, and even on those which are in possession of third persons; yet it seems agreeable to equity, that if he can hope to recover payment of his debt out of the other effects, which remain of the debtor, he should not begin with troubling the third possessor, even although his mortgage was special; but that, before he molests the third possessor, and gives occasion to the consequences of having recourse against the debtor, he ought to discuss the other effects remaining in the debtor's possession." See also Domat's note, *ibid.*, and Cod. Lib. 8, tit. 14, l. 2; *ante*, § 494, notes.*

² *Ersk. Inst. B. 3, tit. 3, § 74.*

is that between one creditor, who is infest in two different tenements for his security, and another creditor who hath an infestment on one of the tenements of a later date. Here the two creditors are connected, by having the same debtor, and a security upon the same subject. Hence it follows, as in the former case, that if it be the will of the preferable creditor to draw his whole payment out of that subject, in which the other creditor is infest, the latter, for his relief, is entitled to have the preferable security assigned to him; which can be done upon the construction above mentioned. For the sum recovered by the preferable creditor out of the subject on which the other creditor is also infest is justly understood to be advanced by the latter, being a sum which he was entitled to, and must have drawn, had not the preferable creditor intervened; and this sum is held to be purchase-money of the conveyance. This construction, preserving the preferable debt entire in the person of the second creditor, entitles him to draw payment of that debt out of the other tenement. By this equitable construction, matters are restored to the same state, as if the first creditor had drawn his payment out of the separate subject, leaving the other entire, for payment of the second creditor. Utility, also, concurs to support this equitable claim.”¹

§ 638. But the interposition of courts of equity is not confined to cases strictly of two funds, and of different mortgages; for it will be applied (as we have seen) in favor of sureties, where the creditor has collateral securities or pledges for his debt.² In such cases, the court will place the surety exactly in the situation of the creditor, as to such securities or pledges, whenever he is called upon to pay the debt; for it would be against conscience, that the creditor should use the securities or pledges to the prejudice of the sureties, or refuse to them the benefit thereof, in aid of their own responsibility.³ And, on the other hand, if a principal

¹ 1 Kames, Equity, B. 1, Pt. 1, ch. 3, § 1, p. 122, 123.

² Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 D. 6; *Stirling v. Forrester*, 3 Bligh, 590, 591; *ante*, § 327, 499, 502.

³ *Aldrich v. Cooper*, 8 Ves. 388, 389. See *Gammon v. Stone*, 1 Ves. 339; *Cheeseborough v. Millard*, 1 Johns. Ch. 413; *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 130, 131, 132; *Clasen v. Morris*, 10 Johns. 524, 539; *Stevens v. Cooper*, 1 Johns. Ch. 430, 431; *Robinson v. Wilson*, 2 Mad. Ch. 569; *Ex parte Rushforth*, 10 Ves. 410, 414; *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 23; *Parsons v. Ruddock*, 2 Vern. 608; *Ex parte Kendall*, 17 Ves. 520; *Wright v. Simpson*, 6 Ves. 734; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 3, ch. 2, § 6, note (i); *Stirling v. Forrester*, 3 Bligh, 590, 591; *ante*, § 324, 326.

has given any securities or other pledges to his surety, the creditor is entitled to all the benefit of such securities or pledges in the hands of the surety, to be applied in payment of his debt.¹

[* § 638 *a*. And even where the surety had effected an insurance upon the life of the principal, with his consent, and the principal had deceased, making the surety his executor, who had received the money upon the policy, to the full amount of the debt; it was held, that so far as it was not required to indemnify the surety, it ought to be applied in payment of the debt.*]

§ 639. Courts of equity do not stop here. If the debt is due and the creditor does not choose to call upon the debtor for payment, the surety may come into equity by a bill against the creditor and the debtor, and compel the latter to make payment of the debt, so as to exonerate the surety from his responsibility; for it is unreasonable that a man should always have such a cloud hang over him.² In cases of this sort, there is not, however (as has been already stated), any duty of active diligence incumbent upon the creditor. It is for the surety to move in the matter. But if the surety requires the exercise of such diligence, and there is no risk, delay, or expense to the creditor, or a suitable indemnity is offered against the consequences of risk, delay, and expense, it seems that the surety has a right to call upon the creditor to do the most he can for his benefit; and, if he will not, a court of equity will compel him.⁴

§ 640. But, as between the debtor himself and the creditor, where the latter has a formal obligation of the debtor, and also a security, or a fund, to which he may resort for payment, there seems to be no ground to say (at least, unless some other equity intervenes), that a court of equity ought to compel the creditor

¹ *Wright v. Morley*, 11 Ves. 22; *ante*, § 327, 499, 558.

² [* *Lea v. Hinton*, 5 De G., M. & G. 823. See also *Drysdale v. Piggott*, 22 Beavan, 238; *Shinn v. Budd*, 1 McCarter, 234.]

³ *Ante*, § 327, 494, 499 *d*; *Ranelagh v. Hayes*, 1 Vern. 189, 190; 1 Eq. Abridg. 17, Pl. 6; *id.* 79, Pl. 5; *Wright v. Simpson*, 6 Ves. 734; *Antrobus v. Davidson*, 3 Meriv. 579; *King v. Baldwin*, 2 Johns. Ch. 561, 562, 563; s. c. 17 Johns. 384; *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 432; *Nisbet v. Smith*, 2 Bro. Ch. 579; *Lee v. Rook*, Mosely, 318. [* But see *Cottin v. Blane*, 2 Anstr. 544; *Eden on Inj.* 64; *Ferrer v. Barrett*, 4 Jones, Eq. 455.]

⁴ *Wright v. Simpson*, 6 Ves. 734; *Nisbet v. Smith*, 2 Bro. Ch. 579; *Cottin v. Blane*, 2 Anstr. 544; *Eden on Inj.* ch. 2, p. 38, 39, 40; *King v. Baldwin*, 2 Johns. Ch. 561, 563; s. c. 17 Johns. 384; *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 123; *ante*, § 327, 499 *d*.

to resort to such fund, before he asserts his claim by a personal suit against his debtor. Why, in such a case, should a court of equity interfere to stop the election of the creditor, as to any of the remedies, which he possesses in virtue of, or under, his contract? There is nothing in natural or conventional justice which requires it. It is true that a different doctrine has been strenuously maintained by very learned judges, in a most elaborate manner.¹ But their opinions, however able, have been met by a reasoning exceedingly cogent, if not absolutely conclusive, on the other side. And, at all events, the settled doctrine now seems to be, in conformity to the early, as well as the latest, decisions, that the debtor himself has no right to insist that the creditor, in such a case, should pretermit any of his remedies, or elect between them, unless some peculiar equity springs up from other circumstances.²

§ 641. The civil law, as we have seen, in the case of sureties, required the creditor, in the first instance, to pursue his remedy against the debtor. But, if the surety thought himself in peril of loss by the delay of the creditor, he might compel the latter to sue the debtor; and thus obtain his indemnity. "Fidejussor" (says the Digest)³ "an, et prius quam solvat, agere possit, ut liberetur? Nec tamen semper expectandum est, ut solvat, aut iudicio accepto condemnetur; si diu in solutione reus cessabit, aut certe bona sua dissipabit; præsertim, si domi pecuniam fidejussor non habeat, qua numerata creditori, mandati actione conveniat." This is a very wholesome and just principle.⁴

¹ See Lord Thurlow's opinion in *Wright v. Nutt*, 1 H. Bl. 136, 150, and Lord Loughborough in *Folliot v. Ogden*, 1 H. Bl. 124. See also *Averall v. Wade, Lloyd & Goold*, 255.

² *Holditch v. Mist*, 1 P. Will. 695; *Wright v. Simpson*, 6 Ves. 713, 726, 728 to 738, Lord Eldon's opinion. See *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 132, 133; *Eden on Inj. ch. 2*, p. 38, 39, 40; *In re Babcock*, 3 Story, 393.

³ *Dig. Lib. 17, tit. 1, l. 38*; *King v. Baldwin*, 2 Johns. Ch. 562; *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 132, 133; *ante*, § 327, 494.

⁴ Mr. Chancellor Kent, in his learned opinion in *Campbell v. Macomb*, 4 Johns. Ch. 538, speaking upon this subject, says: "The question on this subject, so often raised in the civil law, assumed the fact, that the principal debtor was in default; *Si diu in solutione reus cessabit*; and when it is added, *aut certe bona sua dissipabit*, the reference was still to the case, in which the debtor had failed to pay, and was also wasting his goods. I apprehend this must be the true construction; for the only question raised by Marcellus in the text referred to (*Dig. Lib. 17, l. 38, 1*), was, whether the surety could seek indemnity, before he had himself paid,

§ 642. But although courts of equity will thus administer relief to both parties in cases of double funds, which are subject

Fidejussor an, et prius quam solvat, agere possit, ut liberetur? It was a very equitable provision in the civil law to afford a remedy to the surety when the debtor neglected to pay, though the creditor had not required payment, and though the surety had not actually advanced the debt. But it would not have been very just to have given the surety an action for indemnity against the debtor, before the latter was in default, and when such a previous claim made no part of the original contract. The debtor, as the civil law truly observes in another place (Dig. Lib. 17, 1, 22, 1), has an interest not to be compelled to pay before the day; and yet I perceive that several writers on the civil law (Domat, Part I. B. 3, tit. 4, § 3, art. 3; Wood's Institutes of the Civil Law, p. 227; Brown's Lectures on the Civil Law, Vol. 1, 362) refer to this very text to prove, that if the surety be in peril, he may sue before the time of payment, to be indemnified or discharged. It may be so; but these writers refer to no other text but that already cited, and that certainly does not, by any necessary interpretation, warrant the doctrine. Indeed, it seems to preclude it; because the remedy was intended or provided (and so it is expressed) especially for the case of a surety, who could not conveniently discharge the debt himself, and have his regular recourse over, at once, by the action *mandatum*. It was a benevolent provision in that view, and just in no other. In other parts of the Pandects (Dig. Lib. 17, 1, 22, 1, and Lib. 46, 1, 31), Paul and Ulpian lay down a rule in respect to sureties, in perfect accordance with the construction I have ventured to adopt; for they say, that if the surety pays before the day, he cannot have recourse over to the debtor, until the day of payment has arrived. A number of civilians, who have very fully discussed the rights and remedies of sureties under the civil law, and always with this text of Marcellus in view, give us no intimation of such a doctrine. The general rule of the civil law was, that the action by the surety against his principal depended upon his having paid the creditor. (Inst. Lib. 3, 21, 6, and Ferriere's Inst. h. t.) And the cases, in which he might have recourse over, before payment, were all special cases; as, where judgment had already passed against the surety, or the debtor was in failing circumstances, or such a recourse over was part of the original contract, or the debtor had neglected a long time, as from three to ten years, to pay, or the creditor to demand. In all these excepted cases, the surety might sue the debtor, for his indemnity or discharge. But when might he sue him? Not before the debt was due and payable to the creditor, but before the surety had paid the creditor. The authorities to which I now refer (Hub. Prælect. Lib. 3, tit. 21, *De Fide Jussoribus*, 11; Voet, ad Pand. Lib. 46, tit. 1, 34; Pothier, *Traité des Oblig.* n. 441; Ersk. Inst. B. 3, c. 65) all consider these exceptions as only providing for the relief of the surety, *ante solutionem*. He may sue the principal debtor before he has actually paid the debt; and the exceptions were to relieve him from that burden; for, without one of these special causes, says the Code, there would be no foundation, before payment, for the action of *mandatum*. (*Nulla juris ratione, antequam satis creditori pro ea feceris, eam ad solutionem urgeri certum est.* Code 4, 35, 10.) This plain and equitable principle, that, until the debtor is in default, either in his contract with the creditor, or in his contract with the surety, he is not bound to pay or indemnify, seems to pervade equally

to the same debt; and will, in favor of sureties, marshal the securities for their benefit; yet this will be so done in cases where no injustice is done to the common debtor; for then other equities may intervene. And the interposition always supposes, that the parties seeking aid are creditors of the same common debtor; for if they are not, they are not entitled to have the funds marshalled, in order to leave a larger dividend out of one fund, for those who can claim only against that. The principle may be easily illustrated, by supposing the case of a joint debt due to one creditor by two persons, and a several debt due by one of them to another creditor. In such a case, if the joint creditor obtains a judgment against the joint debtors, and the several creditor obtains a subsequent judgment against his own several debtor; a court of equity will not compel the joint creditor to resort to the funds of one of the joint debtors, so as to leave the second judgment in full force against the funds of the other several debtor. At least, it will not do so, unless it should appear that the debt, though joint in form, ought to be paid by one of the debtors only; or there should be some other supervening equity.¹

§ 643. Another case has been put, of a similar nature, by Lord Eldon. "We have gone this length" (said he): "If A. has a right to go upon two funds, and B. upon one, having both the same debtor, A. shall take payment from that fund, to which he can resort exclusively, that, by those means of distribution, both may be paid. That takes place, where both are creditors of the same person, and have demands against funds, the property of the same person. But it was never said, that, if I have a demand against A. and B., a creditor of B. shall compel me to go against A., without more; as if B. himself could insist, that A. ought to pay, in the first instance, as in the ordinary case of drawer and acceptor, or principal and surety, to the intent, that all obliga-

every part of the civil law. Pothier says (*ubi sup. n. 442*), that if the obligation, to which the surety has acceded, must, from its nature, exist a long time, as, if he was surety for the due execution of a trust, he cannot, within the time, sue the principal debtor or trustee for his discharge, *for he knew, or ought to have known, the nature of the obligation he contracted*. Though, where he is surety indefinitely, as, for payment of an annuity, he may, after a long time, as, say ten years, demand that the principal debtor liberate him, by redeeming the annuity."

¹ *Dorr v. Shaw*, 4 Johns. Ch. 17, 20. See *Ayres v. Husted*, 15 Conn. 504; *King v. McVicker*, 3 Sandf. Ch. 192; *Newsom v. McLendon*, 6 Georgia, 392.

tions arising out of these complicated relations may be satisfied. But, if I have a demand against both, the creditors of B. have no right to compel me to seek payment from A., if *not founded in some equity*, giving B. the right for his own sake, to compel me to seek payment from A.”¹

§ 644. Upon this ground, where there was a partnership of five persons, one of whom died, and the other four partners continued the partnership, and afterwards became bankrupt; and the creditors of the four surviving partners sought to have the debts of the five paid out of the assets of the deceased partner, so that the dividend of the estate of the four bankrupts might be thereby increased in favor of their exclusive creditors; without showing, that the assets of the deceased partner ought, as between the partners, to pay those debts, or that there was any other equity to justify the claim; the court refused the relief. On that occasion, the Lord Chancellor said: That, even if it was clear that the creditors of the five partners could go against the separate assets of the deceased partner (which, of course, depended upon equitable circumstances, as the legal remedy was against the survivors only); yet, if it was not clear that the survivors had a right to turn the creditors of the five against those assets, it did not advance the claim, that, without such arrangement, the creditors of the four would get less. Unless the latter could establish, that it is just and equitable, that the estate of the deceased partner should pay in the first instance, they had no right to compel a creditor to go against that estate, who had a right to resort to both funds.² Indeed, there might exist an opposite equity; that of compelling the creditor to go first against the property of the survivors, before resorting to the estate of the deceased partner.³

§ 645. The ground of all these decisions is the same general doctrine already suggested, though the application of that doctrine is necessarily varied by the circumstances. Where a creditor has a right to resort to two persons, who are his joint and several debtors, he is not compellable to yield up his remedy against either; since he has a right to stand upon the letter and spirit of his contract, unless some supervening equity changes or

¹ *Ex parte* Kendall, 17 Ves. 520. See *Neff v. Miller*, 8 Barr, 347; *Stirling v. Brightbill*, 5 Watts, 229; *Ebenhart's Appeal*, 8 Watts & Serg. 327.

² Lord Eldon, in *Ex parte* Kendall, 17 Ves. 520.

³ *Ibid.* See *Newsom v. McLendon*, 6 Georgia, 392.

modifies his rights. If each debtor is equally bound in equity and justice for the debt, as in the case of joint debtors or partners, where both have had the full benefit of the debt, the interference of a court of equity, to change the responsibility from both debtors or partners to one, would seem to be utterly without any principle to support it, unless there was a duty in one of the debtors or partners, to pay the debt in discharge of the other. And, if this be so, *à fortiori*, the creditors of one of the debtors, or partners, cannot be entitled to such interference for their own benefit; for they can, in no just sense, in such a case, work out any right, except through the equity of the debtor, or partner under whom their title is derived.

[* § 645 a. We had occasion to examine the question of the right of partnership creditors, both in regard to partnership and individual property of the partners, as to their priority of right over private creditors as to the former, and equality of right as to the latter, in two important cases in Vermont.¹ It was there considered, upon review of the earlier cases, both English and American, that in equity, the creditors of an insolvent partnership are entitled to have the partnership assets applied in satisfaction of their debts, in preference to the creditors of the individual partners, notwithstanding the separate creditors may have first attached those assets. And, as the partnership creditors have this prior lien upon partnership effects, the private creditors may in equity compel them to first exhaust the partnership effects. For any balance remaining unpaid thereafter, both partnership and private creditors stand upon an equal footing as to the private estate of the individual creditors; and the party effecting a prior lien, either by contract or process of law, will be allowed to maintain such priority; and in the absence of any such lien, equity will decree an equal distribution, wherever any equitable jurisdiction attaches.

[* § 645 b. A nice question often arises in administration suits in equity, in regard to the right of a pecuniary legatee to marshal the assets in such a manner as to compel the residuary devisee of lands to contribute to the payment of debts which the general personalty was inadequate to meet. There is a recent case in the Court of

¹ [* Washburn v. Bank of Bellows Falls, 19 Vt. 278; Bardwell v. Perry, id. 292. See also Tiffany v. Crawford, 1 McCarter, 278.

Chancery Appeal,¹ where the Lord Chancellor, Chelmsford, examined the question and the cases with care. The impression of some of the English equity judges seems to have been since the Wills Act, making wills embrace all the testator's lands at the time of his decease, whether acquired before or after the date of the will; that a residuary clause embracing lands was no more to be regarded as a specific devise of real estate embraced in it, than it was of personalty. But the argument of the Lord Chancellor, in this case, shows very conclusively that, as to all lands owned by the testator at the date of the will, its operation upon them by means of the residuary clause was just as specific as under the former law, when no subsequently acquired lands could pass by the will. His Lordship, after discussing the views expressed by Lord Cottenham,² and quoting with approbation those of Vice-Chancellor Knight Bruce,³ declared that the pecuniary legatee and the residuary devisee of land must contribute ratably to the payment of debts which the general personalty proved inadequate to meet.

§ 645 *c.* Assets in the course of the settlement of estates will be so marshalled that the direction of the testator will be followed as far as that is practicable, without denying the legal priorities of those interested in the estate. Thus, where the testator gave charitable legacies to certain scientific societies, and directed that such legacies should be paid out of his pure personalty, it was held to give the legatees a priority of right upon this particular fund for the full payment of such legacies, and that until after such payment the pure personalty was not applicable to the payment of the administration or personal expenses, or of the debts or other legacies; and the testator having lands in one of the colonies, which were directed in the will to be converted into money, they were treated in the course of administration as pure personalty.⁴]

¹ *Henman v. Fryer*, Law Rep. 3 Ch. App. 420; *s. c.* Law Rep. 2 Eq. 627.

² *Mirchouse v. Scaife*, 2 My. & Cr. 706.

³ *Tombs v. Roch*, 2 Coll. C. C. 502.

⁴ *Beaumont v. Oliveira*, Law Rep. 6 Eq. 534.]

CHAPTER XIV.

PARTITION.

§ 646-648. Equity jurisdiction in partition rests on defect of legal remedy.

§ 649. It may also be convenient for special reasons.

§ 650. Lord Redesdale's exposition of its foundation.

§ 651. Equity grants more perfect relief, by discovery and removing obstructions.

§ 652. Equity makes partition by means of decreeing conveyances, by parties *sui juris*.

§ 653. Remedy in equity to some extent discretionary.

§ 654, 655. Courts of equity can make compensation to some parties.

§ 656-656 c. Other grounds of preferring equitable relief.

§ 657. May assign different parcels to different parties.

§ 658. Recapitulation.

§ 658 a. Rule as to costs in partition.

§ 646. ANOTHER head of concurrent jurisdiction is that of PARTITION in cases of real estate, held by joint-tenants, tenants in common, and coparceners. It is not easy, and has been well observed by Mr. Fonblanque, to trace back or establish the origin of any branch of equitable jurisdiction.¹ But the jurisdiction of courts of equity, in cases of partition, is, beyond question, very ancient.² It is curious enough to observe the terms of apparent indignation, with which Mr. Hargrave has spoken of this jurisdiction, as if it were not only new, but a clear, usurpation. Yet he admits its existence and practical exercise, as early as the reign of Queen Elizabeth;³ a period so remote, that at least one-half of the law, which

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*); *Miller v. Warmington*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 484.

² [The jurisdiction of courts of equity, however, did not extend to all real estates. They had no power, previous to stat. 4 & 5 Vict. ch. 35, § 85, to direct the partition of copyholds, nor of customary freeholds. *Horncastle v. Charlesworth*, 11 Sim. 315; *Jope v. Morshead*, 6 Beavan, 217; *Burrell v. Dodd*, 3 B. & P. 378; although they might decree specific performance of an *agreement* to divide copyholds. *Bolton v. Ward*, 4 Hare, 350. And a partition of a manor is within the power of a court of equity. *Hanbury v. Hussey*, 14 Beavan, 152; 5 Eng. Law & Eq. 81. The writ of partition at law, being abolished in England by stat. 3 & 4 Will. IV. ch. 27, § 36, equity now has exclusive jurisdiction.]

³ See Mr. Fonblanque's remarks on the passage, 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*).

is at present, by way of distinction, called the common law, and regulates the rights of property, and the operation of contracts, and especially of commercial contracts, has had its origin since that time. "A new and compulsory mode of partition (says Mr. Hargrave) has sprung up, and is now fully established: namely, by decree of chancery, exercising its equitable jurisdiction on a bill filed, praying for a partition; in which it is usual for the court to issue a commission for the purpose to various persons, who proceed without a jury. How far this branch of equitable jurisdiction, so trenching upon the writ of partition, and wresting from a court of common law its ancient exclusive jurisdiction of this subject, might be traced, by examining the records of chancery, I know not. But the earliest instance of a bill of partition, I observe, to be noticed in the printed books, is a case of the 48th Elizabeth, in Tothill's Transactions of Chancery, title 'Partition.'¹ According to this short report of the case, the court interfered from necessity, in respect of the minority of one of the parties, the book expressing, that, on that account, he could not be made a party to a writ of partition; which reason seems very inaccurate; for, if Lord Coke is right, that writ doth lie against an infant, and he shall not have his age in it, and, after judgment he is bound by the partition.² But, probably, in Lord Coke's time, this was a rare, and rather unsettled, mode of compelling partition; for, I observe, in a case in chancery, of the 6th Car. I., which was referred to the judges on a point of law between two coparceners, that the judges certified for issuing a writ of partition between them, and that the court ordered one accordingly; which, I presume, would scarcely have been done, if the decree for partition, and a commission to make it, had then been a current and familiar proceeding with chancery.³ However, it appears by the language of the court, in a very important cause, in which the grand question was, Whether the Lord Chancellor here could hold plea of a trust of lands in Ireland, that in the reign of James II., bills of partition were become common."⁴

§ 647. These remarks of the learned author are open to much criticism, if it were the object of these commentaries to indulge in such a course of discussion. It cannot, however, escape notice

¹ Speke v. Walrond, &c. (a), Tothill's Trans. 155 (edit. 1649).

² Co. Litt. 171 b.

³ Chan. 49.

⁴ Hargrave's note (2) to Co. Litt. 169 d.

that, when the learned author speaks of this branch of equitable jurisdiction, as trenching upon the writ of partition, and wresting from the courts of common law their ancient *exclusive* jurisdiction over the subject, he assumes the very matter in controversy. That the writ of partition is a very ancient course of proceeding at the common law is not doubted. But it by no means follows, that the courts of common law had an exclusive jurisdiction over the subject of partition. The contrary may fairly be deemed to have been the case, from the notorious inadequacy of that writ to attain, in many cases, the purposes of justice. Thus, for instance, we know that, until the reign of Henry VIII. no writ of partition lay, except in the case of parceners. Littleton (§ 264) expressly says, "For, such a writ lyeth by parceners only." And to show how narrowly the whole remedial justice of this writ was construed, it was the known settled doctrine, that, if two coparceners be, and one should aliene, in fee, the remaining parcener might bring a writ of partition against the alienee; but the alienee could not have such a writ *against* the parcener. And the like diversity existed in cases of a writ of partition by or against a tenant by the courtesy.¹ Now, such a case would, upon the very face of it, constitute a clear case for the interposition of a court of chancery; upon the ground of the total defect of any remedy at law, and yet of an unquestionable equitable right to partition. Cases of joint tenancy and tenancy in common afford equally striking illustrations. Until the statute of 31st Henry VIII. ch. 1, and 32d Henry VIII. ch. 32, no writ of partition lay at law for a joint-tenant or tenant in common.² And yet the grossest injustice might have arisen, if a court of chancery could not in such a case have interposed, and granted relief, upon the analogy to the legal remedy. The reason given at the common law against partition in such cases was more specious than solid. It was, that a joint tenancy being an estate originally created by the act or agreement of the parties, the law would not permit any one or more of the tenants to destroy the united possession without a similar universal consent. The good sense of the doctrine would rather seem to be, that the joint tenancy being created by the act or agreement of the parties, in a case capable of a severance of interest, the joint

¹ Co. Litt. 175 a.

² Co. Litt. 175 a; 2 Black. Comm. 185; Com. Dig. *Parcener*, C. 6; *Miller v. Warmington*, 1 Jack. & Walk. 473; *Baring v. Nash*, 1 Ves. & B. 555.

interest should continue (exactly as in cases of partnership) so long as, and no longer than, both parties should consent to its continuance.

§ 648. Mr. Justice Blackstone has cited the civil law, as confirmatory of the reasoning of the common law: "Nemo enim invisus compellitur ad communionem."¹ But that law deemed it against good morals to compel joint owners to hold a thing in common; since it could not fail to occasion strife and disagreement among them. Hence, the acknowledged rule was, "In communione vel societate nemo compellitur invitatus detineri."² And, therefore, a decree of partition might always be insisted on, even when some of the part-owners did not desire it. "Communi dividendo iudicium ideo necessarium fuit, quod *pro socio* actio magis ad personales invicem præstationes pertinet, quam ad communem rerum divisionem."³ Etsi non omnes, qui rem communem habent, sed certi ex his dividere desiderant, hoc iudicium inter eos accipi potest."⁴

§ 649. But, independently of considerations of this sort, which might have brought many cases of partition into the court of chancery, in very early times, from the manifest defect of any remedy at law, there must have been many cases, where bills for partition were properly entertainable upon the ordinary ground of a discovery wanted, or of other equities, intervening between the parties.⁵ Lord Loughborough, upon one occasion, said that there is no original jurisdiction in chancery in partition, which is a proceeding at the common law.⁶ This may be true, *sub modo*, where the party is completely remedial at law; but not otherwise. On another occasion, his lordship said: "A party, choosing to have a partition, has the law open to him; there is no equity for it. But the jurisdiction of this court obtained upon a principle of *convenience*. It is not for the court to say, one party shall not hold his estate, as he pleases; but another person has also the same right to enjoy his part, as he pleases; and, therefore, to have the

¹ Dig. Lib. 12, tit. 6, l. 26, § 4; 2 Black. Comm. 185, note (c).

² Cod. Lib. 3, tit. 37, l. 5, ult.

³ Dig. Lib. 10, tit. 3, l. 1; 1 Domat, Civ. Law, B. 2, tit. 5, § 2, art. 11.

⁴ Dig. Lib. 10, tit. 3, l. 8; 1 Domat, Civ. Law, B. 2, tit. 5, § 2, art. 11, p. 303, 306; id. B. 1, tit. 4, § 1, p. 632, 633; Fulbeck's Parallel, B. 2, p. 57, 58; Ersk. Inst. B. 3, tit. 3, § 56; 1 Stair's Inst. 48.

⁵ See *Watson v. Duke of Northumberland*, 11 Ves. 155, *Arguendo*.

⁶ *Mundy v. Mundy*, 2 Ves. Jr. 124.

estate divided. The law has provided, that one shall not defeat the right of the other to the divided estate. Then, the only question is, Whether the legal mode of proceeding is so convenient, as the means this court affords, to settle the interests between them with perfect fairness and equality? It is evident, that the commission is much more convenient than the writ; the valuation of these proportions is much more considered; the interests of all parties are much better attended to; and it is a work carried on for the common benefit of both.”¹

§ 650. This language (it must certainly be admitted) is sufficiently loose and general. But it appears to be by no means a just description of the true nature and reason of the jurisdiction of courts of equity in cases of partition. It is not a jurisdiction founded at all in mere convenience; but in the judicial incompetency of the courts of common law, to furnish a plain, complete, and adequate remedy for such cases.² The true ground is far more correctly stated by Lord Redesdale, in his admirable Treatise on Pleadings in Equity. “In cases of partition of an estate,” says he, “if the titles of the parties are in any degree complicated, the difficulties which have occurred in proceeding at the common law, have led to applications to courts of equity for partitions, which are effected by first ascertaining the rights of the several persons interested; and then issuing a commission to make the partition required; and, upon the return of the commissioners, and confirmation of that return by the court, the partition is finally completed by mutual conveyances of the allotments made to the several parties.”³

¹ *Calmady v. Calmady*, 2 Ves. Jr. 570. See also *Baring v. Nash*, 1 Ves. & Beam. 555.

² Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 120; *Strickland v. Strickland*, 6 Beav. 77, 31; *ante*, § 627, note.

³ Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 120; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*), p. 120, 121. The commissioners do not ascertain the interests of the respective parties; but the court first ascertains the interest and the proportion of each party in the land; and then the commissioners make the allotments accordingly. *Agar v. Fairfax*, 17 Ves. 543. The mode of ascertainment is through the instrumentality of a master, to whom the subject is referred. *Id.* See also *Phelps v. Green*, 3 Johns. Ch. 304, 305; *Burham v. Burham*, 2 Barb. Ch. 404. But the court will, generally, where the title is denied, and has not been established at law, require it to be first established at law; and will retain the bill to await the decision. *Wilkin v. Wilkin*, 1 Johns. Ch. 117; *Parker v. Gerard*, *Ambler*, 236; *Phelps v. Green*, 3 Johns. Ch. 305; *Cox v. Smith*, 4 Johns. Ch.

§ 651. The ground, here stated, is of a complication of titles, as the true foundation of the jurisdiction. But it is not even here expressed with entire legal precision. However complicated the titles of the parties might be, still, if they could be thoroughly investigated at law, in the usual course of proceedings in the common-law courts, there would seem to be no sufficient reason for transferring the jurisdiction of such cases to the courts of equity. The true expression of the doctrine should have been, that courts of equity interfere in cases of such a complication of titles, because the remedy at law is inadequate and imperfect, without the aid of a court of equity to promote a discovery, or to remove obstructions to the right, or to grant some other equitable redress.¹ Besides; the remedy in courts of equity, even in such cases, is more perfect and extensive than at law; for, in equity, conveyances are directed to be made by the parties in pursuance of the allotments of the commissioners, which is a mode of redress of great importance, as a permanent muniment of title, and of which a court of law is, by its own structure, incapable.

§ 652. This is very clearly, but briefly stated, in a judgment of Lord Redesdale. "Partition at law" (said that learned judge), "and in equity, are different things. The first operates by the

271, 276. [*Manners v. Manners*, 1 Green, Ch. 384. For unless the title of both parties is clear, equity cannot decree a partition. *Garret v. White*, 3 Iredell, Eq. 13. So the plaintiff must show that he is entitled to a partition against the defendant. *Ramsay v. Bell*, 3 Iredell, Eq. 209.]

¹ See *Manaton v. Squire*, 2 Freem. 26; *Agar v. Fairfax*, 17 Ves. 551; *Watson v. Duke of Northumberland*, 11 Ves. 153; *Mitford*, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 120; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*), p. 20, 21; *Jeremy on Equity Jurisd.* B. 3, ch. 1, § 1, p. 303, 304. This is the ground of the jurisdiction, as stated by Lord Eldon, in *Agar v. Fairfax* (17 Ves. 551). "This court" (said he) "issues the commission, not under the authority of any act of parliament, but on account of the extreme difficulty attending the process of partition at law; where the plaintiff must prove his title, as he declares, and also the titles of the defendants; and judgment is given for partition according to the respective titles so proved. This is attended with so much difficulty, that, by analogy to the jurisdiction of a court of equity in the case of Dower, a partition may be obtained by bill. The plaintiff must, however, state upon the record his own title, and the titles of the defendants; and, with a view to enable the plaintiff to obtain a judgment for partition, the court will direct inquiries to ascertain who are together with him entitled to the whole subject." The inquiries are (as we have seen), by a reference to a Master. See the form of a Decree in Partition, in 17 Ves. 545, 553, 554; *Strickland v. Strickland*, 6 Beav., 77, 80, 81; *ante*, § 627, note.

judgment of a court of law, and delivering up possession in pursuance of it; which concludes all the parties to it. Partition in equity, proceeds upon conveyances to be executed by the parties; and, if the parties be not competent to execute the conveyances, the partition cannot be effectually had.”¹ Hence, if the infancy of the parties, or other circumstances, prevent such mutual conveyances, the decree can only extend to make the partition, give possession, and order enjoyment accordingly, until effectual conveyances can be made. If the defect arise from infancy,² the infant must have a day after attaining twenty-one years, to show cause against the decree.³ If a contingent remainder, not barable or extinguishable, is limited to a person not in existence, the conveyance cannot be made until he comes into being, and is capable, or until the contingency is determined. An executory devise may occasion a similar embarrassment. And, in either of these cases, a supplemental bill will be necessary to carry the original decree into execution.⁴

§ 653. It is upon this account, that Lord Hardwicke has spoken of the remedy by partition in equity, as being discretionary, and not a matter of right in the parties. “Here” (said he) “the reason” (that the plaintiff should show a title in himself, and not allege, generally, that he is in possession of a moiety of the land) “is because conveyances are directed, and not a partition only; which makes it discretionary, in this court, where a plaintiff has a legal title (whether) they (it) will grant a partition or not; and where there are suspicious circumstances in the plaintiff’s title, the court will leave him to law.”⁵ His lordship was here speak-

¹ *Whaley v. Dawson*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 371, 372.

² [In New York, an infant cannot maintain a suit in equity for partition, either alone, or as a joint party with a co-tenant of full age. *All parties must be adults. Postley v. Rain*, 4 Sandf. Ch. 508.]

³ [By stat. 13 & 14 Vict. ch. 60, § 7 and 30, an infant no longer has a day in court, according to the old forms of decrees, but he is declared a trustee of such portions as are awarded the other parties. See *Brown v. Wright*, 3 Eng. Law and Eq. 190.]

⁴ *Mitford*, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 120, 121; *Attorney General v. Hamilton*, 1 Mad. 214; *Wills v. Slade*, 6 Ves. 498; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 E.; *Brook v. Hertford*, 3 P. Will. 518, 519; *Tuckfield v. Buller*, 1 Dick. 240; *Thomas v. Gyles*, 2 Vern. 232; *Gaskell v. Gaskell*, 6 Sim. 643. See *Martyn v. Perryman*, 1 Rep. in Ch. 235; *post*, § 656 a.

⁵ *Cartwright v. Pultney*, 2 Atk. 380. [If the plaintiff does not prove his title, the bill will be dismissed. *Joep v. Morshead*, 6 Beav. 213. A tenant by the

ing of legal titles; for, in the same case, he expressly stated, that, where the bill for a partition was founded on an equitable title, a court of equity might determine it; or otherwise, it would be without remedy.¹ And, indeed, if there are no suspicious circumstances, but the title is clear at law, the remedy for a partition in equity is as much a matter of right, as at law.²

[* § 653 *a*. But it seems to be well settled that in the case of a mere trading partnership, when it is dissolved or terminated, any one of the partners is entitled to have the whole assets disposed of. The court will not therefore order a partition of the real estate belonging to the firm, among the different partners.³]

§ 654. In regard to partitions, there is also another distinct ground, upon which the jurisdiction of courts of equity is maintainable, as it constitutes a part of its appropriate and peculiar remedial justice. It is, that courts of equity are not restrained, as courts of law are, to a mere partition or allotment of the lands and other real estate between the parties, according to their respective interests in the same, and having the regard to the true value thereof. But courts of equity may, with a view to the more convenient and perfect partition or allotment of the premises, decree a pecuniary compensation to one of the parties for owelty or equality of partition, so as to prevent any injustice or unavoidable inequality.⁴ This a court of common law is not at liberty to do; curtesy initiate has sufficient title to support a bill for partition. *Riker v. Darke*, 4 Edw. Ch. 668.

¹ *Ibid*. It is essential to a partition in equity, that the legal title should be before the court. It would be a decisive answer, that the equitable title only is before the court; for then, how could the conveyances be made, if any should be necessary? See the opinion of Sir Thomas Plumer (Master of the Rolls) in *Miller v. Warmington*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 473. See *Hosford v. Marvin*, 5 Barb. 51.

² *Baring v. Nash*, 1 Ves. & B. 555, 556; *Parker v. Gerrard, Ambler*, 286, and Mr. Blunt's note; *Wisely v. Findlay*, Rand. 361, 398; *Smith v. Smith*, 10 Paige, 473; *post*, § 656. [* See *Lucas v. King*, 2 Stock. Ch. 277.

³ *Wild v. Milne*, 26 Beavan, 504; *Crawshay v. Maule*, 1 Swanst. 495, 518; *Darby v. Darby*, 3 Drewry, 495, 501.]

⁴ *Co. Litt.* 176 *a* and *b*; *id.* 168 *a*. See *Calmady v. Calmady*, 2 Ves. Jr. 570; *Earl of Clarendon v. Hornby*, 1 P. Will. 446, 447; *Warner v. Baynes, Ambler*, 589; *Wilkin v. Wilkin*, 1 Johns. Ch. 116, 117; *Phelps v. Green*, 3 Johns. Ch. 302, 305; *Larkin v. Mann*, 2 Paige, 27; *Storey v. Johnson*, 1 Younge & Coll. 538; *s. c.* 2 Younge & Coll. 586, 610, 611; *post*, § 657; *Cole v. Sewell*, 15 Sim. 284. [But this power rests only with the court. The commissioners themselves cannot award a sum to be paid for owelty of partition. *Mole v. Mansfield*, 15 Sim. 41.]

for when a partition is awarded by such a court, the exigency of the writ is, that the sheriff do cause, by a jury of twelve men, the partition to be made of the premises between the parties, regard being had to the true value thereof; without any authority to make any compensation for any inequality in any other manner.¹ This is in itself a sufficient ground of equity jurisdiction.

§ 655. Cases of a different nature, involving equitable compensation, to which a court of law is utterly inadequate, may easily be put; such, for instance, as cases, where one party has laid out large sums in improvements on the estate. For, although, under such circumstances, the money so laid out does not, in strictness, constitute a lien on the estate; yet, a court of equity will not grant a partition without first directing an account, and compelling the party applying for partition to make due compensation.² So, where one tenant in common has been in the exclusive perception of the rents and profits, on a bill for a partition and account, the latter will also be decreed.³ So, where one tenant in common, supposing himself to be legally entitled to the whole premises, has erected valuable buildings thereon, he will be entitled to an equitable partition of the premises, so as to give him the benefit of his improvements; or if that cannot be done, he will be entitled to a compensation for those improvements.⁴

§ 656. Indeed, in a great variety of cases, especially where the property is of a very complicated nature, as to rights, easements, modes of enjoyment, and interfering claims, the interposition of a court seems indispensable for the purposes of justice. For since partition is ordinarily a matter of right, no difficulty in making a partition is allowed to prevail in equity, whatever may be the case at law, as the powers of the court are adequate to a full and just compensatory adjustment.⁵ There have been cases disposed of in

¹ Co. Litt. 167 a; Com. Dig. *Pleader*, 3 F. 4. Littleton (§ 251) has spoken of a rent-charge in cases of partition for owelty or equality in partition. But this not in a case of compulsive partition by writ; but of a voluntary partition by deed or parol, as the context abundantly shows. Co. Litt. 168 b; Litt. § 250, 252.

² Swan v. Swan, 8 Price, 518; Green v. Putnam, 1 Barb. 500; Conklin v. Conklin, 3 Sandf. Ch. 64.

³ Hill v. Fulbrook, 1 Jac. 574; Lorimer v. Lorimer, 5 Mad. 363; Storey v. Johnson, 1 Younge & Coll. 538; s. c. 2 Younge & Coll. 588.

⁴ Town of Needham, 3 Paige, 546, 555. See also Teal v. Woodworth, 3 Paige, 470.

⁵ *Ante*, § 653.

equity which seemed almost impracticable for allotment at law, as in the case of the Cold Bath Fields, in which Lord Hardwicke did not hesitate to act, notwithstanding the admitted difficulties.¹ Nor does it constitute any objection in equity that the partition does not or may not finally conclude the interests of all persons; as, where the partition is asked only by or against a tenant for life, or where there are contingent interests to vest in persons not *in esse*.² For the court will still proceed to make partition between the parties before the court, who possess competent present interests, such as a tenant for life, or for years.³ But, under such circumstances, the partition is binding upon those parties only who are before the court, and those whom they virtually represent:⁴ and the interests of third persons are not affected.⁵ And it is not an unimportant ingredient in the exercise of equity jurisdiction, in cases of partition, that the parties in interest may be brought before the court, far more extensively than they can be by any processes known to the courts of law, for the purpose of doing complete justice.⁶

§ 656 *a*. Doubts were formerly entertained, whether in a suit in equity for a partition, brought only by or against a tenant for life of the estate, where the remainder is to persons not *in esse*, a decree could be made which would be binding upon the persons in remainder. That doubt, however, is now removed; and the decree is held binding upon them, upon the ground of a virtual representation of them by the tenant for life in such cases.⁷ But, if the partition is made in pursuance of an agreement between the tenant for life and the other party, under such circumstances, the court will direct it to be referred to a master, to inquire and state whether it will be for the future benefit of the remainder-men that the agreement should be carried into execution without any variations, or if with variations, what the variations ought to be.⁸

¹ Warner *v.* Baynes, Ambler, 589; Turner *v.* Morgan, 8 Ves. 143, 144.

² Gaskell *v.* Gaskell, 6 Sim. 643.

³ Wills *v.* Slade, 6 Ves. 498; Baring *v.* Nash, 1 Ves. & B. 555; Wotten *v.* Copeland, 7 Johns. Ch. 140; Gaskell *v.* Gaskell, 6 Sim. 643; Striker *v.* Mott, 2 Paige, 387, 389; Woodworth *v.* Campbell, 5 Paige, 518.

⁴ Story on Equity Pleadings, § 144 to 148; Gaskell *v.* Gaskell, 6 Sim. 643.

⁵ Agar *v.* Fairfax, 17 Ves. 544. ⁶ Anon., 3 Swanst. 139, note (b).

⁷ Gaskell *v.* Gaskell, 6 Sim. 643. See also Martyn *v.* Perryman, 1 Ch. 235; Brook *v.* Hertford, 2 P. Will. 518; *ante*, § 653.

⁸ Gaskell *v.* Gaskell, 6 Sim. 643.

§ 656 b. In suits in equity, also for partition, various other equitable rights and claims and adjustments will be made, which are beyond the reach of courts of law. Thus, if improvements have been made by one tenant in common, a suitable compensation will (as we have seen) be made him upon the partition, or the property on which the improvements have been made, assigned to him.¹ So courts of equity will not take care, that the parties have an equal share and just compensation; but they will assign to the parties respectively such parts of the estate as would best accommodate them, and be of most value to them with reference to their respective situations, in relation to the property before the partition.² For in all cases of partition, a court of equity does not act merely in a ministerial character, and in obedience to the call of the parties, who have a right to the partition; but it founds itself upon its general jurisdiction as a court of equity, and administers its relief *ex æquo et bono*, according to its own notions of general justice and equity between the parties. It will, therefore, by its decree,³ adjust all the equitable rights of the parties interested in the estate; and will, if necessary for this purpose, give special instructions to the commissioners,⁴ and nominate the commissioners, instead of allowing them to be nominated by the parties.⁵

§ 656 c. And courts of equity, in making these adjustments, will not confine themselves to the mere legal rights of the original tenants in common, but will have regard to the legal and equitable rights of all other parties interested in the estate, which have been derived from any of the original tenants in common; and will, if necessary for this purpose, direct a distinct partition of each of several portions of the estate, in which the derivative alienees have a distinct interest, in order to protect that interest.⁶ Thus, where A., B., and C. were tenants in common in undivided third parts of

¹ *Ante*, § 655.

² *Storey v. Johnson*, 1 Younge & Coll. 538; s. c. 2 Younge & Coll. 586; *Green v. Putnam*, 1 Barb. S. C. 509.

³ [Such a decree amounts to no more than an ordinary conveyance. *Anderson v. Hughes*, 5 Strobb. 74.]

⁴ [The report of the commissioners is regarded in the same light as the verdict of a jury on a trial at law; and will not be set aside except upon grounds similar to those for which a new trial at law is granted. *Livingston v. Clarkson*, 4 Edw. Ch. 596.]

⁵ *Ibid.*; *Haywood v. Judson*, 4 Barb. 228.

⁶ *Haywood v. Judson*, 4 Barb. 228.

an estate, comprising Whiteacre and Blackacre, and C. had conveyed his interest in Blackacre to D., and his interest in Whiteacre to E.; upon a bill filed by A. and B., for partition of the whole estate, the court directed that Blackacre should be divided into three parts, and one part should be conveyed to A., and B., and D., respectively; and that Whiteacre should be divided into three parts, and one part should be conveyed to A., and B., and E., respectively. In this way, consistently with the rights of A. and B., the interests of D. and E. were, as in equity they ought to be, fully protected and secured.¹

§ 657. In equity, too (and it would seem that the same rule prevails at law, though this has sometimes been doubted),² where there are divers parcels of lands, messuages, and houses, partition need not be made of each estate separately, so as to give to each party his moiety or other portion in every estate. But the whole of one estate may be allotted to one, and the whole of another estate to the other, provided that his equal share is allotted to each.³ But it is obvious, that, at law, such a partition can rarely be conveniently made, because the court cannot decree compensation, so as to make up for any inequality, which must ordinarily occur in the allotment of different estates to each party. In equity it is in the ordinary course.⁴

§ 658. It is upon some or all of these grounds, the necessity of a discovery of titles, the inadequacy of the remedy at law, the difficulty of making the appropriate and indispensable compensatory adjustments, the peculiar remedial processes of courts of equity and their ability to clear away all intermediate obstructions against complete justice, that these courts have assumed a general concurrent jurisdiction with courts of law in all cases of partition.⁵ So that, it is not now deemed necessary to state, in the bill, any peculiar ground of equitable interference.⁶ And, unless I am greatly

¹ *Storey v. Johnson*, 1 Younge & Coll. 538; s. c. 2 Younge & Coll. 586.

² See *arguendo* in *Earl of Clarendon v. Hornby*, 1 P. Will. 446, 447; *Storey v. Johnson*, 1 Younge & Coll. 538; s. c. 2 Younge & Coll. 586.

³ *Earl of Clarendon v. Hornby*, 1 P. Will. 446, 447.

⁴ *Ibid.*; *ante*, § 654; [In New York, by statute, a part of the land may be allotted to one of the parties, and the rest ordered to be sold and distributed. *Haywood v. Judson*, 4 Barb. 228.]

⁵ *Haywood v. Judson*, 4 Barb. 229.

⁶ *Mitford, Eq. Plead.* by Jeremy, 120; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, ch. 1, § 2, p. 304, 305; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*), p. 10, 21.

misled in my judgment, this review of the true sources and objects of this concurrent jurisdiction demonstrates, in the most satisfactory manner, how ill-founded the animadversions of Mr. Hargrave (already cited) are, upon the exercise of this jurisdiction.¹ But the most conclusive proof in its favor is, that, wherever it exists, it has almost entirely superseded any resort to courts of law to obtain a partition. In making partition, however, courts of equity generally follow the analogies of the law; and will decree it in such cases, as the courts of law recognize as fit for their interference.² But courts of equity are not, therefore, to be understood as limiting their jurisdiction in partition, to cases cognizable or relievable at law;³ for there is no doubt, that they may interfere in cases where a partition would not lie at law;⁴ as, for instance, in the case where an equitable title is set up⁵ [or where the estate to be divided is incorporeal].

[* § 658 a. The English rule as to costs in partition suits, where there is no controversy in regard to the title of the claimants, is that the parties pay their own costs up to the time of making the order for partition, and afterwards the costs are borne by the estate.⁶ But where the defendants were infants the court, in making an order for the sale of the estate under the English statute,⁷ ordered the costs of all parties to be paid out of the estate.⁸]

¹ *Ante*, § 646.

² *Ibid.*; *Wills v. Slade*, 6 Ves. 498; *Baring v. Nash*, 1 Ves. & B. 555.

³ See *Bailey v. Sisson*, 1 Rhode Island, 233.

⁴ *Swan v. Swan*, 8 Price, 519; *Woodworth v. Campbell*, 5 Paige, 518; *Haywood v. Judson*, 4 Barb. 228.

⁵ *Cartwright v. Pulteney*, 2 Atk. 380; *Cox v. Smith*, 4 Johns. Ch. 276. See *Hosford v. Merwin*, 5 Barb. S. C. 51; *Miller v. Warmington*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 473; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 E. *Partition*; *ante*, § 653.

⁶ [* *Landell v. Baker*, *Law Rep.* 6 Eq. 268.

⁷ 31 & 32 Vict. ch. 40.

⁸ *Osborn v. Osborn*, *Law Rep.* 6 Eq. 338.]

CHAPTER XV.

PARTNERSHIP.

[* § 659. In partnership, the aid of courts of equity often required.

§ 660. Difficulties which occur in proving the partnership.

§ 661. Legal remedies defective and inadequate.

§ 662. Remedy, by action of account.

§ 663-665. Inadequacy of the remedy, especially where one partner deceases, or the default complained of is special.

§ 666. Equity will decree specific performance of contract to enter into partnership for a definite term.

§ 667. And will enforce other stipulations by injunction.

§ 668, 668 a. Will regulate the dissolution according to equity and justice.

§ 669. Will restrain the partners from injuring the firm.

§ 670. Will not interfere, in many cases, especially if agreed to be arbitrated.

§ 671. Interpose in many cases where courts of law will not.

§ 672, 672 a. Receiver will be appointed when necessary.

§ 673, 673 a, 673 b. May dissolve the partnership for misconduct or incapacity of the partners, or where the object has failed.

§ 674. May treat real estate as part of the effects.

§ 675. May give joint and separate creditors their precise equities.

§ 676. May grant relief against the estate of deceased partners.

§ 676 a, 676 b. Authority of surviving partner, or one buying out concern.

§ 676 c. Dissolution by death of partner, after notice to dissolve.

§ 677. May take an account to determine the interest of the vendee on execution.

§ 678. May restrain such sale by injunction.

§ 679, 680. Equity gives relief between two firms having some members in common.

§ 681. Where one partner fraudulently releases debts.

§ 682. Analogy between equity law and civil law.

§ 683. Recapitulation.

§ 683 a. Ground of jurisdiction of matters abroad.]

§ 659. ANOTHER head of concurrent jurisdiction, arising from similar causes, is in relation to PARTNERSHIP.¹ In cases of this nature, where a remedy at law actually exists, it is often found to be very imperfect, inconvenient, and circuitous. But in a very great variety of cases, there is, in fact, no remedy at all at law, to meet the exigency of the case. We shall, in the first instance, take notice of such remedies as exist at law; and then proceed to the consideration of others, which are peculiar to courts of equity.

¹ See Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 V. 6.

§ 660. And here, it may be proper to begin by a reference to that, which is, in its own nature, preliminary to all other inquiries ; to wit, the actual existence of the partnership itself. Although, in many cases, written articles or instruments of partnership exist, as the foundation of the joint concerns ; yet, in many other cases, the partnership itself exists merely in parol ; and, even in cases of written articles, there are many defects and omissions, which the parties have left unprovided for. Now, a controversy may arise in regard to the existence of the partnership between the partners themselves, or between them and third persons. In each case its existence may mainly depend upon the discovery to be obtained through the instrumentality of a court of equity. If written articles exist, they may be suppressed or concealed ; if none exist, it may be impracticable to obtain due knowledge of the partnership by any competent witnesses in the ordinary course of law. But, in by far the most numerous and important class of cases, that of secret and dormant partners, there may not be, and indeed ordinarily will not be, any adequate means at law to get at the names or numbers of the partners. In all such cases, the powers of a court of equity will be found most effective, by means of a bill of discovery, to bring out all the facts, as well in controversies between the partners themselves as between them and third persons.

§ 661. But admitting a partnership to exist, let us now proceed to consider, what are the remedies at law which exist between the partners themselves. These, of course, are dependent upon the nature of the partnership, and the grievance for which a remedy is sought. If the articles of partnership are under seal, and any violation of any of the stipulations therein contained exists, it may be, and is properly, remediable by an action of covenant. If there are written articles not under seal, or the partnership is, by a parol agreement, the proper remedy, for any breach of the stipulations, is by an action of assumpsit. But, as we shall presently see, both these remedies are utterly inadequate to provide for many exigencies and injuries, which may arise out of the violation of partnership rights and duties.

§ 662. The most extensive, and generally the most operative, remedy at law, between partners, is an action of account. This is the appropriate, and, except under very peculiar circumstances, is the only, remedy, at the common law, for the final adjustment

and settlement of partnership transactions. It is a very ancient remedy between partners, in which one, naming himself a merchant, may sue his partner for a reasonable account, naming him a merchant, and charging him, as the receiver of the moneys of himself, arising from whatever cause or contract, for the common profit of both, according to the law-merchant.¹

§ 663. But it is wholly unnecessary to dwell upon the inadequacy of this remedy in cases of partnership, as all the remarks already made, in respect to the dilatory, cumbrous, and inconvenient proceedings in actions of account,² apply, with augmented force, to cases of partnership, where it is absolutely impossible, in many cases, to settle the concerns of the partnership, without the production of books, vouchers, and other documents, belonging to the partnership, and the personal examination of the partners themselves. So intimate is the confidence, and so universal the community of interest and operations between partners, that no proceedings, not including a thorough and minute discovery, can enable any court to arrive at the means of doing even reasonable justice between them. And, in addition to the common difficulties in ordinary cases, the death of either partner puts an end, at the common law, to any means of enforcing this remedy by account; for it being founded in privity between the parties, no suit lay by or against the personal representative of the deceased partner, to compel an account.³

§ 664. In a few cases, indeed, where there has been a covenant or promise to account, courts of law have attempted to approximate towards an effectual remedy in the shape of damages for a breach of the obligation. But it is manifest, that, even in these cases, the damages must be wholly uncertain, unless an account can be fully and fairly taken between the parties; for, otherwise, there will be no rule by which to ascertain the damages. There has, too, been a struggle, in cases where one partner has been compelled to advance or pay money on the partnership account out of his own private funds, to give him a remedy at law for a contribution from the other partners. But it is difficult to perceive, how, except under very peculiar circumstances, such a remedy will lie.⁴

¹ Co. Litt. 172 a; Fitz. F. B. 117, D.

² *Ante*, § 442 to 449.

³ *Ante*, § 446.

⁴ It is no part of the object of these Commentaries, to show in minute detail the nature and extent of the legal remedies, in cases of this sort. Where the

For it is impossible, during the continuance of the partnership, without taking a general account, to say, that any one partner, so called upon to advance or to pay money, is, on the whole, a creditor of the firm to such an amount. And if he is, how, in point of technical propriety, can he institute a remedy against his other partners alone, as contradistinguished from the partnership? It is very certain, that, if he should lend the partnership a sum of money, he could not sue for it at law, for he could not sue himself; and it is not very easy to perceive a clear distinction between this and the former case. And if it should turn out, upon taking a general account, that such partner was a debtor to the partnership, it would be unreasonable and useless to allow him to recover the very money, which he must refund to the partnership; for the maxim of common sense, as well as of common justice, is, *Frustra petis, quod statim alteri reddere cogaris*.¹

§ 665. Cases have also occurred, in which suits at law have been maintained for the breach of an agreement to furnish a certain sum or stock for the partnership purposes. In such a case the transaction is not so much a partnership transaction, as an

partnership has been dissolved, and, upon such a dissolution, all the accounts of the partnership have been adjusted, as between the partners; or where one partner has purchased the property, and agreed to pay all the debts; there, if the other partner is called upon to pay a partnership debt, he may be entitled at law to contribution. So where, upon a dissolution of a partnership, all the accounts have been adjusted, and a balance struck, an action at law will lie for such balance. So, where a sum of money has been received for one partner's separate account by the other partners, he may recover the same in an action of assumpsit, as money had and received for his use. But all these, and other cases of the like nature, stand upon their own special circumstances, and steer wide of the general doctrine. There is no case in the English courts (although there may be cases in some of the American courts) where any action at law, except on account, has been held to lie generally to settle partnership accounts, or for a contribution by one partner against the others, for money paid by him for the use of the partnership. The learned reader will find many of the cases collected and commented on in Mr. Collyer's valuable work on Partnership, B. 2, ch. 3, § 1, 2, 4, and in the notes of the able American editor, Mr. Phillips, in his edition of that work. Mr. Gow, in his work on the same subject (ch. 2, § 3), has discussed the same subject at large; and in his last (the third) edition, he has corrected some of the inadvertencies into which he had fallen on this subject, by relying too much upon some loose dicta in some of the authorities. See also *Holmes v. Higgins*, 1 B. & Cressw. 74; *Harvey v. Crickett*, 5 M. & Selw. 336; *Bovill v. Hammond*, 6 B. & Cressw. 149.

¹ Branch's Maxims, 55.

agreement to launch the partnership; and an agreement to pay money or furnish stock, for such a purpose is an individual engagement of each partner to the other.¹ For the breach of such an agreement, there seems no reasonable objection to the maintenance of a suit at law.² But, what should be the measure of the damages, must depend upon the circumstances of each particular case. No general rule can be laid down, to govern all cases. If the partnership has no specific term fixed for its continuance, in many cases the damages would be merely nominal. If it has such a specific fixed term, the damages must necessarily be of a very uncertain nature and extent. The whole sum agreed for the partnership stock could not be the true rule; for that would be in effect to give one partner the whole capital stock. And, on the other hand, the possible profits of the partnership, if carried on, would not furnish a rule, because of the uncertainty of such profits, and their being to arise *in futuro*, and the injury not being certain at the time of the breach.

[* 665 *a*. Where it was agreed that each partner should have interest at the rate of five per cent on his share of the capital, and the profits were then to be equally divided between them, and a decree was made for the dissolution of the partnership, and sale of the property, but the business was carried on some time afterwards, until the property was finally sold, it was held that after the dissolution, interest was no longer payable under the agreement; and that in the division of the proceeds of the sale each partner would take what was found to be his share of capital at the time of the dissolution, with the accumulations thereof, meaning thereby the actual interest or income received upon it, and the residue must be equally divided between them.³]

¹ See *Venning v. Leckie*, 13 East, 7; *Gale v. Leckie*, 2 Stark. 107; *Terrill v. Richards*, 1 Nott & McCord, 20.

² See *Vance v. Blain*, 18 Ohio, 532; *Ellison v. Chapman*, 7 Blackf. 224.

³ [* *Watney v. Wells*, Law Rep. 2 Ch. App. 250. See also *Nowell v. Nowell*, 7 Eq. 538. Where one of two solicitors in entering into a partnership, furnished a premium of £800, on account of having less skill and experience in business, and after two years the other claimed a dissolution on the ground that the inexperience of the former injured the business, the term agreed being seven years, and a dissolution followed; the court held the former entitled to a return of a proportion of the premium for the unexpired term. *Atwood v. Maude*, Law Rep. 3 Ch. App. 369.

A joint ownership and management of lands for profit of all the owners, some

§ 666. The remedial justice administered by courts of equity is far more complete, extensive, and various, adapting itself to the particular nature of the grievance, and granting relief in the most beneficial and effectual manner, where no redress whatsoever, or very imperfect redress, could be obtained at law. In the first place, they may decree a specific performance of a contract to enter into a partnership for a specific term of time (for it would, ordinarily, be useless to enforce one, which might be dissolved instantly, at the will of either party),¹ and to furnish a share of the capital stock; which a court of law is incapable of doing.² This remedy, however, is rarely sought, for the plain reason, that few partnerships can be hoped to be successful, where they begin in mutual distrust, dissatisfaction, or enmity. [* And a contract to join a firm as a partner, or else to lend the firm £5,000, for two years on the acceptance of the firm, was held not to be a contract which could be specifically performed in equity.³]

§ 667. In like manner, after the commencement, and during the continuance, of the partnership, courts of equity will, in many cases, interpose to decree a specific performance of other agreements in the articles of partnership. If, for instance, there be an agreement to insert the name of a partner in the firm name, so as to clothe him publicly with all the rights of acting for the partnership; and there be a studied, intentional, prolonged, and continued inattention to the application of the partner to have his name so used and inserted in the firm name; courts of equity will grant a specific relief, by an injunction against the use of any

of the lands being mineral and some agricultural, was held not to amount to a partnership, and upon the decease of one of the joint owners, his share will go to his heir and not to the next of kin. *Seward v. Blakeway*, Law Rep. 6 Eq. 479; s. c. Law Rep. 4 Ch. App. 603. In a suit for the dissolution of a partnership, an order for the sale of the business will be made before decree in order to prevent total loss. *Heath v. Fisher*, 17 W. R. 69.]

¹ This qualification (ordinarily) is necessary; for a specific performance may, in some cases, be important to establish rights under a partnership which has no fixed term for its continuance. Mr. Swanston, in his excellent note to *Crawshay v. Maule*, 1 Swanst. 511, 512, 513, has clearly shown the propriety of the qualification. See also *Birchett v. Bolling*, 5 Munf. 442.

² *Anon.*, 2 Ves. 629, 630; *Hercy v. Birch*, 9 Ves. 357; *Buxton v. Lister*, 3 Atk. 385; *Hibbert v. Hibbert*, cited in *Collyer on Partn. B.* 2, ch. 2, § 2, p. 197; *Crawshay v. Maule*, 1 Swanst. 511, 512, Mr. Swanston's note; *Peacock v. Peacock*, 16 Ves. 49; *Birchett v. Bolling*, 5 Munf. 442.

³ [* *Sichel v. M. senthal*, 8 Jur. n. s. 275; s. c. 30 Beav. 371.]

other firm name, not including his. But the remedy, in such cases, is strictly confined to cases of studied delay and omission, and relief will not be given for a temporary, accidental, or trivial omission.¹ So, where there is an agreement not to raise money in the name, or on the credit of the firm, for the private use of any one partner; courts of equity will, from the manifest danger of injury to the firm, interpose by injunction to stop such an abuse of the credit of the firm.² So, where there is an agreement, by the partners, not to engage in any other business, courts of equity will act by injunction to enforce it; and, if profits have been made by any partner, in violation of such an agreement, in any other business, the profits will be decreed to belong to the partnership,³ so, if it is agreed that upon the dissolution of a partnership, a certain partnership book shall belong to one of the partners, and the other shall have a copy of it, courts of equity will decree a specific performance.⁴

§ 668. Courts of equity will even go farther; and, in case of a partnership existing during the pleasure of the parties, with no time fixed for its renunciation, will interfere (as it should seem) to qualify or restrain that renunciation, unless it is done under fair and reasonable circumstances; for, if a sudden dissolution is about to be made, in ill faith, and will work irreparable injury, courts of equity will, upon their ordinary jurisdiction to prevent irreparable mischief, grant an injunction against such a dissolution.⁵ And this is in strict conformity to the doctrine of the civil law on the same subject. By that law a partnership, without an express agreement for its continuance, may be dissolved by either party, provided the renunciation be *bonâ fide* and reasonable. "Societas coiri potest vel in perpetuum, id est, dum vivunt, vel ad tempus, vel ex tempore, vel sub conditione. Dissociamur renunciatione, morte, capitis minutione, et egestate."⁶ But, then, it is afterwards added: "Diximus, disensu solvi societatem; hoc ita

¹ Marshall v. Colman, 2 Jac. & Walk. 266, 269.

² Ibid.

³ See Somerville v. Mackay, 16 Ves. 382, 387, 389.

⁴ Lingen v. Simpson, 1 Sim. & Stu. 600. For a more full consideration of this subject, see Story on Partnership, § 188 to 190; id. § 204 to 215; id. § 224 to 232; *post*, § 671; Richardson v. Bank of England, 4 Mylne & Craig, 165, 172, 173.

⁵ See Chavany v. Van Sommer, cited 1 Swanst. 511, 512, in a note. See id. 123; 16 Ves. 49; 17 Ves. 198, 308.

⁶ Dig. Lib. 17, tit. 2, l. 1, § 4.

est, si omnes dissentiunt. Quid ergo, si unus renunciat? Cassius scripsit, eum, qui renunciaverit societati, a se quidem liberare socios suos, se autem ab illis non liberare. Quod utique observandum est, si dolo malo renunciatio facta sit, &c.¹ Si intempestive renunciatur societati, esse pro socio actionem."² And again, Labeo writes: "Si renunciaverit societati unus ex sociis eo tempore, quo interfuit socii non dirimi societatem, committere eum in pro socio actione."³ And again, in a more general form, it is said: "In societate coëunda, nihil attinet de renuciatione cavere; quia ipso jure societatis intempestiva renunciatio in æstimationem venit."⁴ The same principles are recognized in the countries which derive their jurisprudence from the civil law.⁵

[* 668 *a*. And where a surgeon, who had long carried on business, agreed to take his assistant into the concern, and sold him a portion of the profits for £800, and agreed to "become and continue" partners, from the date of the articles, "for such term and time, as they should mutually agree so to continue partners," it was held that in equity he could not be permitted to dissolve the partnership immediately afterwards and retain the premium. And where the articles provided that in the event of the death of one of the partners, the survivor might purchase his share and interest in the business, but if he should decline, it should be sold to any other person, and the surviving partner declined either to purchase or to admit a purchaser into the business, he was charged with the value of the deceased partner's interest, or share.⁶]

§ 669. In like manner, courts of equity will interfere, by way of injunction, to prevent a partner, during the continuation of the partnership, from doing any acts injurious thereto, as by signing or indorsing notes to the injury of the partnership, or by driving away customers, or by violating the rights of the other parties, or his duty to them, even when a dissolution is not necessarily contemplated.⁷

¹ Dig. Lib. 17, tit. 2, l. 65, § 3.

² Dig. Lib. 17, tit. 2, l. 14.

³ Dig. Lib. 17, tit. 2, l. 65, § 5; id. l. 17, § 2; 1 Swanst. 510, 511, 512, note; Vinn. in Inst. Comm. 680, § 1, 2, 3.

⁴ Dig. Lib. 17, tit. 2, l. 17, § 2.

⁵ See 2 Bell, Comm. B. 7, ch. 3, n. 1227; Ersk. Inst. B. 3, tit. 3, § 26; 1 Stair's Inst. B. 1, tit. 16, § 4; Pothier, *Traité de Société*, n. 65, 149, 150, 151.

⁶ [* Featherstonhaugh *v.* Turner, 25 Beavan, 382. See also Astle *v.* Wright, 23 Beavan, 77.]

⁷ See Charlton *v.* Poulter, 19 Ves. 148, *n*; Goodman *v.* Whitcomb, 1 Jac. &

§ 670. There are instances (and others might be mentioned) of the remedial justice of courts of equity, in carrying into specific effect the articles of partnership, where the remedy at law would be wholly illusory or inadequate. But it is not hence to be inferred, that courts of equity will, in all cases, interfere to enforce a specific performance of such articles. Where the remedy at law is entirely adequate, no relief will be granted in equity. And where the stipulation, though not against the policy of the law, yet is an effort to divest the ordinary jurisdiction of the common tribunals of justice, such as an agreement in case of any disputes, to refer the same to arbitrators, courts of equity will not, any more than courts of law, interfere to enforce that agreement; but they will leave the parties to their own good pleasure in regard to such agreements. The regular administration of justice might be greatly impeded or interfered with, by such stipulations, if they were specifically enforced. And at all events, courts of justice are presumed to be better capable of administering and enforcing the real rights of the parties, than any mere private arbitrators, as well from their superior knowledge, as their superior means, of sifting the controversy to the very bottom.¹

§ 671. The remedial justice of courts of equity is not confined to cases of the nature above stated. They may not only provide for a more effectual settlement of all the accounts of the partnership after a dissolution, but they may take steps for this purpose, which courts of law are inadequate to afford. They may, perhaps, interpose, and decree an account, where a dissolution has not taken place, and is not asked for, although ordinarily, they are not inclined to decree an account, unless under special circumstances, if there is not an actual or contemplated dissolution, so that all the affairs of the partnership may be wound up.²

Walk. 589; Collyer on Partn. B. 2, ch. 3, § 5; *England v. Curling*, 8 Beavan, 129; *Hall v. Hall*, 12 Beavan, 414.

¹ *Street v. Rigby*, 6 Ves. 815, 818; *Thompson v. Charnock*, 8 T. R. 139; *Connor v. Drake*, 1 Ohio St. 168; *Waters v. Taylor*, 15 Ves. 10; *Wellington v. Mackintosh*, 2 Atk. 569.

² *Forman v. Homfray*, 2 Ves. & B. 329; *Harrison v. Armitage*, 4 Mad. 143; *Russell v. Loscombe*, 4 Simons, 8; *Knowles v. Haughton*, 11 Ves. 168; s. c. *Collyer on Part. B. 2, ch. 3, § 3, p. 163, note (a)*; *Waters v. Taylor*, 15 Ves. 15. Lord Eldon, in *Forman v. Homfray* (2 V. & Beam. 329), thought that no account ought to be decreed, unless there is also a prayer for a dissolution. But the then Vice Chancellor (Sir John Leach), in *Harrison v. Armitage* (4 Mad.

§ 672. But where such dissolution has taken place, an account will not only be decreed, but, if necessary, a manager or receiver 143), thought otherwise. In the later case of *Russell v. Loscombe* (4 Simons, 8), the present Vice Chancellor (Sir Lancelot Shadwell) agreed with Lord Eldon, and held the bill demurrable for not praying a dissolution. In *Walworth v. Holt*, 4 Mylne & Craig, 619, 635 to 639, Lord Cottenham reviewed the cases at large, and said: "When it is said, that the court cannot give relief of this limited kind, it is, I presume, meant that the bill ought to have prayed a dissolution, and a final winding up of the affairs of the company. How far this court will interfere between partners, except in cases of dissolution, has been the subject of much difference of opinion, upon which it is not my purpose to say any thing beyond what is necessary for the decision of this case; but there are strong authorities for holding, that to a bill praying a dissolution, all the partners must be parties; and this bill alleges that they are so numerous as to make that impossible. The result, therefore, of these two rules would be, — the one binding the court to withhold its jurisdiction except upon bills praying a dissolution, and the other requiring that all the partners should be parties to a bill praying it; that the door of this court would be shut in all cases in which the partners or shareholders are too numerous to be made parties, which, in the present state of the transactions of mankind, would be an absolute denial of justice to a large portion of the subjects of the realm, in some of the most important of their affairs. This result is quite sufficient to show that such cannot be the law; for, as I have said upon other occasions, I think it the duty of this court to adapt its practice and course of proceeding to the existing state of society, and not by too strict an adherence to forms and rules, established under different circumstances, to decline to administer justice, and to enforce rights for which there is no other remedy. This has always been the principle of this court, though not at all times sufficiently attended to. It is the ground upon which the court has, in many cases, dispensed with the presence of parties, who would, according to the general practice, have been necessary parties. In *Cockburn v. Thompson*, Lord Eldon says: 'A general rule, established for the convenient administration of justice, must not be adhered to in cases in which, consistently with practical convenience, it is incapable of application'; and again, 'The difficulty must be overcome upon this principle, that it is better to go as far as possible towards justice, than to deny it altogether.' If, therefore, it were necessary to go much further than it is, in opposition to some highly sanctioned opinions, in order to open the door of justice in this court to those who cannot obtain it elsewhere, I should not shrink from the responsibility of doing so; but in this particular case, notwithstanding the opinions to which I have referred, it will be found that there is much more of authority in support of the equity claimed by this bill, than there is against it. It is true that the bill does not pray for a dissolution, and that it states the company to be still subsisting; but it does not pray for an account of partnership dealing and transactions, for the purpose of obtaining the share of profits due to the plaintiffs, which seems to be the case contemplated in the opinions to which I have referred; but its object is, to have the common assets realized and applied to their legitimate purpose, in order that the plaintiffs may be relieved from the responsibility to which they are exposed, and which is contrary

will be appointed to close the partnership business, and make sale of the partnership property ; so that a final distribution may be to the provisions of their common contract, and to every principle of justice. But whether the interest of the plaintiffs in right of which they sue arises from such responsibility, or from any other cause, cannot be material, the question being, Whether some partners, having an interest in the application of the partnership property, are entitled on behalf of themselves and the other partners, except the defendants, to sue such remaining partners in this court for that purpose, pending the subsistence of the partnership ; and if it shall appear that such a suit may be maintained by some partners on behalf of themselves and others similarly circumstanced, against other persons, whether trustees and agents for the company, or strangers being possessed of property of the company, it may be asked, Why the same right of suit should not exist, when the party in possession of such property happens also to be a partner or shareholder. In *Chan-acey v. May*, the defendants were partners. In the *Widows' case*, before Lord Thurlow, cited by Lord Eldon, the bill was on behalf of the plaintiffs and all others in the same interest, and sought to provide funds for a subsisting establishment. In *Knowles v. Haughton*, 11th July, 1805, reported in *Vesey*, but more fully in *Collyer on the Law of Partnership*, the bill prayed an account of partnership transactions, and that the partnership might be established, and the decree directed an account of the brokerage business, and to ascertain what, if any thing, was due to the plaintiff in respect thereof ; and the Master was to inquire whether the partnership between the plaintiff and the defendant had at any time, and when, been dissolved ; showing that the court did not consider the dissolution of the partnership as a preliminary necessary, before directing the account. In *Cockburn v. Thompson*, the bill prayed a dissolution ; but it was filed by certain proprietors on behalf of themselves and others, and Lord Eldon overruled the objection, that the others were not parties. In *Hitchens v. Congreve*, the bill was on behalf of the plaintiff and the other shareholders, against certain shareholders who were also directors, not praying a dissolution, but seeking only the repayment to the company of certain funds alleged to have been improperly abstracted from the partnership property by the defendants ; and Sir Anthony Hart overruled a demurrer, and his decision was affirmed by Lord Lyndhurst. In *Walburn v. Ingilby*, the bill did not pray a dissolution of partnership, and Lord Brougham, in allowing the demurrer upon other grounds, stated that it could not be supported upon the ground of want of parties, because a dissolution was not prayed. In *Taylor v. Salmon*, the suit was by some shareholders, on behalf of themselves and others, against Salmon, also a shareholder, to recover property claimed by the company, which he had appropriated to himself ; and the Vice Chancellor decreed for the plaintiff, which was affirmed on appeal. The bill did not pray a dissolution, and the company was a subsisting and continuing partnership. That case and *Hitchens v. Congreve* differ from the present in this only, that in those cases the partnerships were flourishing and likely to continue ; whereas, in the present, though not dissolved, it is unable to carry on the purposes for which it was formed, an inability to be attributed, in part, to the withholding that property which this bill seeks to recover. So far, this case approximates to those in which the partnership has been dissolved, as to which it

made of the partnership effects.¹ This a court of law is incompetent to do. The accounts are usually directed to be taken (as has been already suggested) before a Master, who examines the parties, if necessary, and requires the production of all the books, papers, and vouchers of the partnership, and he is armed from time to time, by the court, with all the powers necessary to effectuate the objects of the reference to him. If it is deemed expedient and proper, the court will restrain the partners from collecting the debts, or disposing of the property of the concern, and will direct the moneys of the firm received by any of them, to be paid into

is admitted that this court exercised its jurisdiction. This case also differs from the two last-mentioned cases in this, that the difficulty in which the plaintiffs are placed, and the consequent necessity for the assistance of this court, is greater in this case;—no reason, certainly, for withholding that assistance. How far the principle upon which these cases have proceeded is consistent with the doctrine in *Russell v. Loscombe*, 'That in occasional breaches of contract between partners, when they are not of so grievous a nature as to make it impossible that the partnership should continue, the court stands neuter,' will be to be considered if the case should arise. It is not necessary to express any opinion as to that in the present case; but it may be suggested that the supposed rule that the court will not direct an account of partnership dealings and transactions, except as consequent upon a dissolution, though true in some cases and to a certain extent, has been supposed to be more generally applicable than it is upon authority, or ought to be upon principle. It is, however, certain that this supposed rule is directly opposed to the decision of Sir J. Leach, in *Harrison v. Armitage*, and *Richards v. Davies*. Having referred to so many cases, in which suits similar to the present have been maintained by some partners on behalf of themselves and others, it is scarcely necessary to say any thing as to the objection for want of parties; and as to the assignees of those shareholders who have become bankrupts, those assignees are now shareholders in their places, for the purpose of any interest they have in the property of the company; and, as such, are included in the number of those on whose behalf this suit is instituted. A similar objection was raised and overruled in *Taylor v. Salmon* as to the shares of Salmon. Upon the authority of the cases to which I have referred, and of the principle to which I have alluded, if it be necessary to resort to it, I am of opinion, that a demurrer cannot be supported; and the usual order, overruling a demurrer, must be substituted for that pronounced by the Vice Chancellor." The point must, therefore, be held to be still open for further consideration. See *Hall v. Hall*, 3 Eng. Law & Eq. 196; *Thomas v. Davies*, 11 Beavan, 29; *Smith v. Jeges*, 4 Beavan, 503.

¹ See *Crawshay v. Maule*, 1 Swanst. 506, 523; *Peacock v. Peacock*, 16 Ves. 57, 58; *Featherstonhaugh v. Fenwick*, 17 Ves. 298, 308; *Crawshay v. Collings*, 15 Ves. 218; *Wilson v. Greenwood*, 1 Swanst. 471; *Oliver v. Hamilton*, 2 Anst. 453.

court. In this way it adapts its remedial authority to the exigencies of each particular case.¹

[* 672 *a*. But the court will not appoint a receiver, or manager, at the instance of one of the partners, in a suit which does not seek to dissolve the partnership; nor in one which does, upon an interlocutory application, and merely upon evidence that the partners do not co-operate in the management of the business. To justify such an appointment, it must be shown, that one partner has interfered so as to prevent the business being carried on.² But where the partnership property consisted of mines, plant, and slaves, in the Brazils, but the shares were sold in England, in the form of scrip, transferable by delivery, and the defendant and another, at a meeting of the shareholders, had been appointed sole directors and trustees of the property, and the associate had died, and disputes had arisen, it was held that a holder of shares purchased in the market, might maintain a bill against defendant, as sole surviving trustee, for an account of the receipts and payment of the debts of the association, and a division of the profits; and for a receiver and injunction, although the bill did not pray for a dissolution. The defendant having left England, after the filing of the bill and pending the motion for a receiver and injunction, it was considered the plaintiff had an equity to secure the property of the association, and for that purpose a receiver was appointed.³]

§ 673. But, perhaps, one of the strongest cases, to illustrate the beneficial operation of the jurisdiction of courts of equity in regard to partnership, is their power to dissolve the partnership during the term for which it is stipulated. This is a peculiar remedy which courts of common law are incapable of administering, by the nature of their organization. Such a dissolution may be granted, in the first place, on account of the impracticability of carrying on the undertaking, either at all or according to the stipulations of the articles.⁴ In the next place, it may be granted on account of the insanity, or permanent incapacity, of one of the

¹ See Collyer on Partnership, B. 2, ch. 3, § 3, and the cases there cited; *Foster v. Donald*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 252, 253.

² [* *Roberts v. Eberhardt*, Kay, 148; *Birdsall v. Colie*, 2 Stockton, Ch. 63.

³ *Sheppard v. Oxenford*, 1 Kay & J. 491.]

⁴ *Baring v. Dix*, 1 Cox, 213; *Waters v. Taylor*, 2 Ves. & B. 299; *Barr v. Speirs*, 2 Bell, Comm. 642, § 1227, note (6).

partners.¹ In the next place, it may be granted on account of the gross misconduct of one or more of the partners² [although the party applying for the dissolution may have committed the first wrong].³ But trifling faults and misbehavior, which do not go to the substance of the contract, do not constitute a sufficient ground to justify a decree for a dissolution.⁴

[* § 673 a. In a late case⁵ before the Vice Chancellor, the subject of the right of the other partners to claim a dissolution, on account of the insanity of one of the firm, is very extensively and lucidly discussed. That was a motion for an interim injunction to restrain a partner, who six months previously, being temporarily of unsound mind, had attempted to commit suicide, from interfering in the partnership affairs, and it was refused on the ground that the evidence did not show, that at the time of the motion, he was incompetent to conduct the business of the partnership according to the articles. And it was said that the circumstances, that the conduct and state of mind of the partner in question were such as at once to destroy the confidence of the other partners, and to induce customers to withdraw their custom from the firm, and that the malady under which he labored might as easily have led him to attempt the life of one of his partners, were not sufficient grounds for granting the motion. But a motion in a cross-suit, to restrain the defendants in such cross-suit from preventing the partner, who had been insane, from transacting the business of the partnership, as a partner, was granted. From an examination of the authorities it was determined here

¹ *Waters v. Taylor*, 2 Ves. & B. 299; *Sayer v. Bennet*, 1 Cox, 107; s. c. 1 *Montague on Partn. Appx.* 18; *Collyer on Part. B.* 2, ch. 3, § 3; *Pearse v. Chamberlain*, 2 Ves. 34, 35; *Wrexham v. Huddleston*, 1 Swanst. 514, note; *Isler v. Baker*, 6 Humph. 85.

² See *Marshall v. Colman*, 2 Jac. & Walk. [266] 300; *Goodman v. Whitcomb*, 1 Jac. & Walk. [569] 594; *Chapman v. Beach*, id. [573] 594; *Norway v. Rowe*, 19 Ves. 148; *Waters v. Taylor*, 2 Ves. & B. 304; *Master v. Kirton*, 3 Ves. 74; *De Berenger v. Hammel*, 7 Jarman, Convey. 26, cited *Collyer on Partn. B.* 2, ch. 3, § 3, p. 161; *Russell v. Loscombe*, 4 Simons, 8.

³ *Blake v. Dorgan*, 1 Green (Iowa), 537. [* See *Essell v. Hayward*, 6 Jur. n. s. 690, where it is held that a breach of trust by one partner gives the other a right to dissolve the partnership, and the dissolution takes effect from the date of the notice of dissolution.]

⁴ *Goodman v. Whitcomb*, 1 Jac. & Walk. [569] 592; *Collyer on Partn. B.* 2, ch. 3, § 3.

⁵ [* *Anonymous*, 2 Kay & Johnson, 441.

that the following propositions were established. 1. That actual insanity of a partner is not in itself a dissolution of the partnership, but there must be a decree of dissolution. 2. That such a decree notwithstanding actual insanity proved to have existed before the filing of the bill, will not be made in a disputed case, without further inquiry, whether, at the time when the relief is sought, the party is in such a state of mind as to be able to conduct the business of the firm in partnership with the other members according to the articles of partnership. And it would seem that when the party is shown to have once been in the state above detailed, the affirmative of the issue is properly thrown upon him. 3. That insanity existing when the relief is sought, with the apparent probability of its continuance, is good ground to decree a dissolution.¹ The following cases may be referred to, in addition to those before cited upon this question.² But the Court of Chancery will not dissolve a partnership on the ground of a small infraction of the articles.³ They will, however, restrain a partner from doing an intentional serious injury to the partnership property.⁴

§ 673 *b*. The court dissolved a partnership entered into for a term of years, when, without any breach of the articles of partnership, circumstances had so altered, that it could not be carried on upon the footing originally contemplated, and the confidence mutually reposed, having ceased, and given place to mistrust, it was apparent the business could not go on without mutual injury.⁵ The general rule here recognized is, that where the circumstances have so changed, and the conduct of the parties is such as to render it impossible to continue the relation without injury to all the partners, the court will decree a dissolution.]

§ 674. There are other considerations, which make a resort to a court of equity, instead of a court of law, not only a more convenient, but even an indispensable, instrument for the purposes of justice. Thus, real estate may be bought and held for the pur-

¹ *Ibid*.

² *Kirby v. Carr*, 3 Y. & C. Exch. 184; *Jones v. Noy*, 2 My. & K. 125; *Sadler v. Lee*, 6 Beavan, 324; *Besch v. Frolich*, 1 Phill. 172; *Leaf v. Coles*, 1 De G., McN. & G. 171, 174; *Bagshaw v. Parker*, 10 Beavan, 532.

³ *Anderson v. Anderson*, 25 Beavan, 190. See *Crosbie v. Guion*, 23 Beavan, 518, as to the effect of the death of one of the partners.

⁴ *Marshall v. Watson*, 25 Beavan, 501.

⁵ *Harrison v. Tenant*, 21 ib. 482.]

poses of the partnership, and really be a part of the stock in trade. The conveyance in such a case may be in the name of one, for the benefit of all the partners; or in the name of all, as tenants in common, or as joint-tenants. In case of the death of a partner, by which a dissolution takes place, the real estate may thus become severed at law from the partnership funds, and vest in the surviving partner exclusively, or in the heirs of a deceased partner, in common with the survivor, according to the particular circumstances of the case. In taking an account of the partnership effects at law, it is impossible for the court, for the benefit of creditors, to bring such real estate into the account; or to direct a sale of it; or to hold it a part of the partnership funds. It must be treated in courts of law just as its character is according to the common law. But in a court of equity, in such a case, the real estate is treated, to all intents and purposes, as a part of the partnership funds, whatever may be the form of the conveyance.¹ For a court of equity considers the real estate, to all intents and purposes, as personal estate; and subjects it to all the equitable rights and liens of the partners, which would apply to it, if it were personal estate. And this doctrine not only prevails, as between the partners themselves and their creditors; but (as it should seem) as between the representatives of the partners also. So that real estate, held in fee for the partnership, and as a part of its funds, will, upon the death of the partner, belong, in equity, not to the heirs-at-law, but to the personal representatives and distributees of the deceased; unless, perhaps, there be a clear and determinate expression of the deceased partner, then it shall go to his heir-at-law beneficially.²

§ 675. The lien, also, of partners upon the whole funds of the

¹ See *Goodburn v. Stevens*, 5 Gill, 1; *Rice v. Barnard*, 20 Verm. 479; *Buchan v. Sumner*, 2 Barb. Ch. 165; *Washburn v. Bank of Bellows Falls*, 19 Verm. 278, 292; *Day v. Perkins*, 2 Sandf. Ch. 359; *Cox v. McBurney*, 2 Sandf. S. C. 561; *Averill v. Loucks*, 6 Barb. S. C. 19, 470.

² See *Collyer on Partn. B. 2, ch. 1, § 1, p. 68 to 76*; *Lake v. Craddock*, 3 P. Will. 158; *Elliot v. Brown*, 9 Ves. 597; *Thornton v. Dixon*, 3 Bro. Ch. 199 (Belt's edition); *Bell v. Phyn*, 7 Ves. 453; *Ripley v. Waterworth*, 7 Ves. 425; *Selkrig v. Davies*, 2 Dow. 242; *Townsend v. Devaynes*, 1 Montague on Partn. Appx. 96 [191]; *Gow. on Partn. ch. 2, § 1*; *Randall v. Randall*, 7 Sim. 271; *Morris v. Kearsley*, 2 Younge & Coll. 139; *Bligh. v. ment*, 2 Younge & Coll. 268, 288; *Houghton v. Houghton*, 1 Simons, 491; *Hoxie v. Carr*, 1 Sumner, 173; *Delnonico v. Guillaume*, 2 Sandford, 366.

partnership, for the balance finally due to them respectively, seems incapable of being enforced in any other manner, than by a court of equity, through the instrumentality of a sale. Besides, the creditors of the partnership have the preference to have their debts paid out of the partnership funds, before the private creditors of either of the partners. But this preference is, at law, generally disregarded; in equity, it is worked out through the equity of the partners over the whole funds.¹ On the other hand, the separate creditors of each partner are entitled to be first paid out of the separate effects of their debtor, before the partnership creditors can claim any thing;² which also can be accomplished only by the aid of a court of equity; for at law a joint creditor may proceed directly against the separate estate.³ This is another illustration of the doctrine of marshalling assets, and proceeds upon analogous principles; and it is commonly applied in cases of insolvency, or bankruptcy. There are certain exceptions to the rule, which confirm, rather than abate, its force; as they stand upon peculiar reasons.

§ 676. In like manner, in cases of partnership debts, if one of the partners dies and the survivor becomes insolvent or bankrupt, the joint creditors have a right to be paid out of the estate of the deceased partner, through the medium of the equities subsisting between the partners.⁴ Indeed, a broader principle is now estab-

¹ *Twiss v. Massey*, 1 Atk. 67; *Ex parte Cook*, P. Will. 500; *Ex parte Elter*, 3 Ves. 240; *Ex parte Clay*, 6 Ves. 833; *Collyer on Partnership*, B. 4, ch. 2, § 1, 2, 3; *Campbell v. Mullett*, 2 Swanst. 574, 575; *Ex parte Ruffin*, 6 Ves. 125, 126; *Gray v. Chiswell*, 9 Ves. 118; *Commercial Bank v. Wilkins*, 9 Greenl. 28; *Muir v. Leitch*, 7 Barbour, 341.

² See this rule considered and questioned in *Cleghorn v. Insurance Bank of Columbus*, 9 Geo. 319.

³ *Ibid.*; *Dutton v. Morrison*, 17 Ves. 205 to 210; *Tucker v. Oxley*, 5 Cranch, 34. See *Morris v. Morris*, 4 Gratt. 293; *Grosvenor v. Austin*, 6 Ohio, 103; *Murrill v. Neill*, 8 How. U. S. 414; *Mason v. Bogg*, 2 M. & R. 443. [It has been held, however, even at law, that if a joint creditor first levy his execution upon the separate real estate of one partner, a private creditor may still levy upon the same estate and bring a writ of entry against the partnership creditor; in which case the private creditor obtains all his priorities in a court of law. *Jarvis v. Brooks*, 3 Foster, 136.]

⁴ *Collyer on Partn.* B. 3, ch. 3, § 4; *Cowell v. Sykes*, 2 Russ. 191; *Campbell v. Mullett*, 2 Swanst. 574, 575; *Ex parte Ruffin*, 6 Ves. 125, 126; *Ex parte Kendall*, 17 Ves. 514, 526, 527; *Lane v. Williams*, 2 Vern. 277, 292; *Vulliamy v. Noble*, 3 Meriv. 614, 618; *Gray v. Chiswell*, 9 Ves. 118; *Brice's case*, 1

lished ; and it is held that insolvency or bankruptcy is not necessary, in order to justify the creditors of the partnership in resorting to the assets of the deceased partner ; and that such creditors may, in the first instance, proceed against the executor or administrator of the deceased partner, leaving him to his remedy over against the surviving partners ; though, certainly, the surviving partners, in a suit in equity, in such a case, would be proper parties, if not necessary parties, to the bill.¹ The doubts, formerly entertained upon this subject, seem to have arisen from the general principle, that the joint estate is the first fund for the payment of the joint debts, and as the joint estate vests in the surviving partner, the joint creditors, upon equitable considerations, ought to resort to the surviving partner before they seek satisfaction from the assets of the deceased partner.² The ground of the present doctrine is, that every partnership debt is joint and several ; and, in all such cases, resort may primarily be had for the debt to the surviving partners, or to the assets of the deceased partner.³ Nor is this doctrine confined to cases of partnership, or to cases of a mercantile character. It equally applies to all cases, where there is a joint loan to several persons, not partners, whether it be in the course of mercantile transactions or not ; for

Meriv. 620 ; *Hamersley v. Lambert*, 2 Johns. Ch. 509, 510 ; *Jenkins v. De Groot*, 1 Caines, Cas. Err. 122. If the right of the joint creditors is worked out altogether through the equity of the partners, it seems somewhat difficult to perceive, how the separate estate of a deceased partner, who is a creditor of the firm far beyond all the partnership funds, should, the joint estate being insolvent, be compellable to pay any of the joint debts beyond these funds. Yet Lord Eldon acted upon the ground of the liability of such separate estate, in *Gray v. Chiswell*, 9 Ves. 118. If, on the other hand, the true doctrine be that avowed by Sir William Grant, in the case of *Devaynes v. Noble* (1 *Meriv.* 529), afterwards affirmed by Lord Brougham (2 *Russ. & Mylne*, 495), that a partnership contract is several, as well as joint, then there seems no ground to make any difference whatsoever, in any case between joint and several creditors, as to payment out of joint or separate assets. See Collyer on Partn. B. 3, ch. 3, § 4, p. 337 to 347 ; *Hamersley v. Lambert*, 2 Johns. Ch. 509, 510. This is now the established doctrine ; *Wilkinson v. Henderson*, 1 *Mylne & Keen*, 582 ; *Thorpe v. Jackson*, 2 *Younge & Coll.* 553, 561, 562 ; *Story on Partn.* § 312 ; *ante*, § 162 to 164.

¹ *Wilkinson v. Henderson*, 1 *Mylne & Keen*. 582 ; *Devaynes v. Noble*, 2 *Russ. & Mylne*, 495 ; *Thorpe v. Jackson*, 2 *Younge & Coll.* 553 ; *Sleech's case*, 1 *Meriv.* 539 ; *Braithwaite v. Britain*, 1 *Keen*, 219.

² *Wilkinson v. Henderson*, 1 *Mylne & Keen*, 582.

³ *Thorpe v. Jackson*, 2 *Younge & Coll.* 553, 561, 562 ; *Sleech's case*, 1 *Meriv.* 539. See *Emanuel v. Bird*, 19 *Ala.* 596.

the debt will be treated in equity as joint and several; and in case any of the debtors die, the creditor may have relief out of his assets, without claiming any relief against the surviving joint debtors, or showing that they are unable to pay the debt by reason of their insolvency.¹

[* § 676 *a*. Where the continuing partner covenanted with the retiring one, that he would pay the partnership debts and save him harmless, on that account, it was held, after the decease of the retiring partner and the bankruptcy of the other, and the presentation of partnership claims against the estate of the deceased partner, that by the true construction of the contract of dissolution it did not create a lien upon a policy of insurance belonging to the effects of the partnership, as to the unpaid debts of the partnership; and if it had created such a lien, still, the mortgagee of the policy from the surviving partner was not bound to see to the application of the mortgage money, he being justified in supposing that it would be properly applied.² The power of a solvent partner, upon the bankruptcy of his associate (and the same rule holds, in regard to the acting partner, in closing the concern), under all circumstances, is given him in his personal capacity, to wind up the concern, and cannot be delegated to another.³

§ 676 *b*. So also it often happens, either on account of the form of the articles of partnership, or the manner in which the surviving partners treat the effects of the concern, after the decease of one of their number, that they are liable to account for a share of the profits to the personal representatives of the deceased partner or the legal *cestui que trust*. This subject is perspicuously discussed by Sir John Romilly, Master of the Rolls, in the recent case of *Wedderburn v. Wedderburn*.⁴ He divides the cases, where a liability of this kind occurs, into three classes. 1. Where the surviving partners continue the trade with the capital, composed wholly or in part of the estate of the deceased partner. The rule applicable to such a case is the same, whatever be the cause of the dissolution. The liability to account proceeds wholly on the

¹ *Thorpe v. Jackson*, 2 Younge & Coll. 553, 561, 562; *Sleech's case*, 1 Meriv. 539. See *Emanuel v. Bird*, 19 Ala. 596.

² [* *In re Langmead's Trusts*, 7 De G., M. & G. 353.

³ *Fraser v. Kershaw*, 2 Kay & J. 496.

⁴ 22 Beavan, 84; s. c. 2 Keen, 722; 4 My. & Cr. 41; 2 Beavan, 208; 17 Beavan, 158; 18 Beavan, 465.

ground that the profits are the product of the capital in part, and therefore, to that extent, belong to the owner of the capital. 2. Where the legal personal representatives of the deceased partner employ the assets in carrying on trade for themselves. The liability to account, in this class of cases,¹ proceeds from misconduct and breach of trust in the executors. In this class of cases the *cestuis que trust* are entitled, at their option, to legal interest on the amount, or a share of the profits. 3. This occurs where the surviving partners are also the personal representatives of the deceased partner. The liability to account here may involve an inquiry into the misconduct of the executors, but is affected more or less by the articles of partnership. That is true also of the first class. But in the second, no contract is supposed to exist. It is therefore a mere breach of trust. The third class will be governed by the rules which apply generally to the case of surviving partners, carrying on the trade of a deceased partner, and these rules are regulated by contract, and may vary in each case. The rule, as laid down by Lord Eldon, "which is to be applied, must be deduced, in almost every case, from the particular circumstances of that very case."¹

§ 676 *c.* A partnership was entered into for a term of years, subject to a power in one of the partners to determine the same by giving three months' notice, and it was provided that in case of the death of this partner before the partnership was fully wound up, his executors should settle its affairs. This partner during the term gave notice to dissolve, and died before the expiration of the three months. It was held that the partnership determined on the death of the partner.²]

§ 677. In regard to partnership property, another illustration, of a kindred character, involving the necessity of an account, may be put to establish the utility and importance of equity jurisdiction. It is well known, that at law, an execution for the separate debt of one of the partners may be levied upon the joint property of the partnership.³ In such a case, however, the judgment creditor can levy, not the moiety or undivided share of the judgment debtor in the property, as if there were no debts of the partnership,

¹ *Crawshay v. Collings*, 2 Russell, 325.

² [* *Bell v. Nevin*, 12 Jur. N. S. 935.]

³ See *Dow v. Sayward*, 14 N. H. 9. Sometimes granted until the interest of such partner in the property is ascertained. *Place v. Sweetzer*, 16 Ohio, 142.

or lien on the same for the balance due to the other partner; but he can levy the interest only of the judgment debtor, if any, in the property, after the payment of all debts and other charges thereon.¹ In short, he can take only the same interest in the property, which the judgment debtor himself would have upon the final settlement of all the accounts of the partnership. When, therefore, the sheriff seizes such property upon an execution, he seizes only such undivided and unascertained interest; and if he sells under the execution, the sale conveys nothing more to the vendee, who thereby becomes a tenant in common, substituted to the rights and interests of the judgment debtor in the property seized.² In truth, the sale does not transfer any part of the joint property to the vendee, so as to entitle him to take it from the other partners; for that would be, to place him in a better situation than the partner himself.³ But it gives him, properly speaking; a right in equity to call for an account, and thus to entitle himself to the interest of the partner in the property which shall, upon such settlement, be ascertained to exist.⁴ It is obvious, from what has been already stated, how utterly inadequate the means of a court of law are to take such an account. And, indeed, under a levy of this sort, it is not easy to perceive what authority a court of law has to interfere at all, to take an account of the partnership transactions; or by what process it can enforce it.⁵ In

¹ *West v. Skip*, 1 Ves. 239; *2 Swanst.* 526; *Barker v. Goodair*, 11 Ves. 85; *Muir v. Leach*, 7 Barb. S. C. 341; *Dutton v. Morrison*, 17 Ves. 205, 206, 207; *Deal v. Bogue*, 8 Harris, 228; *Ferson v. Munroe*, 1 Foster, 462; *Gow on Partn. ch. 4, § 1, p. 247, 248.*

² *West v. Skip*, 1 Ves. 239; *Chapman v. Koops*, 3 Bos. & Pull. 289; *Skip v. Harwood*, 2 Swanst. 586; s. c. cited *Cowp.* 451; *Dutton v. Morrison*, 17 Ves. 205, 206; *Heydon v. Heydon*, 1 Salk. 392; *Taylor v. Fields*, 4 Ves. 396; *Fox v. Hanbury*, *Cowp.* 445; *Nicol v. Mumford*, 4 Johns. Ch. 522; *In re Wait*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 587, 588, 589; *Moody v. Payne*, 2 Johns. Ch. 548; *Habershon v. Blurton*, 1 De Gex & Smale, 121.

³ But see *Thompson v. Lewis*, 34 Maine, 167; *United States v. Williams*, 4 McLean, 51.

⁴ *Gow on Partn. ch. 4, § 1, p. 249 to 254*; *In re Smith*, 16 Johns. 106; *Nicol v. Mumford*, 4 Johns. Ch. 522, 525; s. c. 20 Johns. 611; *Shaver v. White*, 6 Munf. 110; *Murray v. Murray*, 5 Johns. Ch. 70; *Newhall v. Buckingham*, 14 Ill. 405; *Marquand v. New York Manuf. Co.*, 17 Johns. 525.

⁵ See *Chapman v. Koops*, 3 Bos. & Pull. 389; *Eddie v. Davidson*, 2 Doug. 650; *Waters v. Taylor*, 2 Ves. & B. 300, 301; *Dutton v. Morrison*, 17 Ves. 205, 206; *In re Wait*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 585; *Habershon v. Blurton*, 1 De Gex & Smale,

such a case, therefore, the proper remedy for the other partners, if nothing is due to the judgment debtor out of the partnership funds, is to file a bill in equity against the vendee of the sheriff, to have the proper accounts taken.¹

§ 678. In cases of the seizure of the joint property, for the separate debt of one of the partners, a question has arisen, how far a court of equity would interfere, upon a bill for an account of the partnership, to restrain the sheriff from a sale, or the vendee of the sheriff from an alienation of the property seized, until the account was taken, and the share of the partner ascertained. Mr. Chancellor Kent has decided, that an injunction for such a purpose ought not to issue to restrain a sale, by the sheriff, upon the ground that no harm is done to the other partners; and the sacrifice, if any, is the loss of the judgment debtor only.² But that does not seem a sufficient ground, upon which such an injunction is to be denied. If the debtor partner has, or will have, upon a final adjustment of the accounts, no interest in the partnership funds; and if the other partners have a lien upon the funds, not only for the debts of the partnership, but for the balance ultimately due to them; it may most materially affect their rights, whether a sale takes place or not. For it may be extremely difficult to follow the property into the hands of the various vendees; and their lien may, perhaps, be displaced, or other equities arise, by intermediate

121. The remarks of Lord Eldon on this point, in *Waters v. Taylor* (2 Ves. & B. 301), are very striking and important. "If the courts of law" (said he) "have followed courts of equity in giving execution against partnership effects, I desire to have it understood that they do not appear to me to adhere to the principle, when they suppose that the interest can be sold, before it has been ascertained what is the subject of sale and purchase. According to the old law, I mean before Lord Mansfield's time, the sheriff, under an execution against partnership effects, took the undivided share of the debtor, without reference to the partnership account. But a court of equity would have set that right, by taking the account, and ascertaining what the sheriff ought to have sold. The courts of law, however, have now repeatedly laid down, that they will sell the actual interest of the partner, professing to execute the equities between the parties; but forgetting that a court of equity ascertained previously, what was to be sold. How could a court of law ascertain what was the interest to be sold, and what the equities depending upon an account of all the concerns of all the partners for years?"

¹ *Chapman v. Kooops*, 3 Bos. & Pull. 290; *Waters v. Taylor*, 2 Ves. & B. 300, 301; *Taylor v. Fields*, 4 Ves. 396; *Dutton v. Morrison*, 17 Ves. 205, 206, 207; *In re Wait*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 588, 589; *Gow on Partn.* ch. 4, § 1, p. 253, 254.

² *Moody v. Payne*, 2 Johns. Ch. 548, 549.

bonâ fide sales of the property, by the vendees, to other purchasers without notice; and the partners may have to sustain all the chances of any supervening insolvencies of the immediate vendees.¹ To prevent multiplicity of suits, and irreparable mischiefs, and to insure an unquestionable lien, it would seem perfectly proper, in cases of this sort, to restrain any sale by the sheriff. And, besides, it is also doing some injustice to the judgment debtor, by compelling a sale of his interest under circumstances, in which there must, generally, from its uncertainty and litigious character, be a very great sacrifice to his injury. If he has no right, in such a case, to maintain a bill to save his own interest, it furnishes no ground why the court should not interfere in his favor through the equities of the other partners. This seems (notwithstanding the doubts suggested by Mr. Chancellor Kent) to be the true result of the English decisions on this subject; which do not distinguish between the case of an assignee of a partner, and that of an executor or administrator of a partner, or of the sheriff, or of an assignee in bankruptcy.²

§ 679. Another illustration of the beneficial result of equity jurisdiction, in cases of partnership, may be found in the not uncommon case of two firms dealing with each other, where some or all of the partners in one firm are partners with other persons in the other firm. Upon the technical principles of the common law, in such cases, no suit can be maintained at law in regard to any transactions or debts between two firms; for in such suit, all the partners must join, and be joined; and no person can maintain a suit against himself, or against himself and others. The objection is, at law, a complete bar to the action.³ Nay, even after the death of the partner or partners, belonging to both firms, no action, upon any contract, or mutual dealing, *ex contractu*, is maintainable by the survivors of one firm against those of the

¹ See *Skip v. Harwood*, 2 Swanst. 586, 587.

² See *Taylor v. Field*, 3 Ves. 396, 397, 398; s. c. 15 Ves. 559, note; *Barker v. Goodair*, 11 Ves. 85, 86, 87; *Skip v. Harwood*, 2 Swanst. 586, 587; *Franklyn v. Thomas*, 3 Meriv. 234; *Hawkshaw v. Perkins*, 2 Swanst. 548, 549; *Parker v. Pistor*, 3 Bos. & Pull. 288, 289; *Eden on Injunct.* 31; *Collyer on Part. B.* 3, ch. 6, § 10, p. 474 to 478; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 112. See also *Brewster v. Hammet*, 4 Connect. 540. See also *In re Smith*, 16 Johns. 106, and the Reporter's learned note; *Gow on Part. ch. 4*, § 1, p. 252.

³ *Bosanquet v. Wray*, 6 Taunt. 597; s. c. 2 Marsh. 319; *Mainwaring v. Newman*, 2 Bos. & Pull. 120.

other firm; for, in a legal view, there never was any subsisting contract between the firms; as a partner cannot contract with himself.¹

§ 680. But there is no difficulty in proceeding in courts of equity to a final adjustment of all the concerns of both firms, in regard to each other; for, in equity, it is sufficient, that all parties in interest are before the court as plaintiffs, or as defendants; and they need not as at law, in such a case, be on the opposite sides of the record. [Thus, if the same person is a general partner in two firms, one of which becomes insolvent, while indebted to the other, the latter may recover its debt or dividend of the insolvent firm, and the interest of such general partner in the *solvent* firm, may also be reached in equity by the creditors of the insolvent firm, by a proceeding to account.²] In equity, all contracts and dealings between such firms, of a moral and legal nature, are deemed obligatory, though void at law.³ Courts of equity, in all such cases, look behind the form of the transactions to their substance; and treat the different firms, for the purposes of substantial justice, exactly as if they were composed of strangers, or were in fact corporate companies.

§ 681. Upon similar grounds, one partner cannot, at law, maintain a suit against his copartners, to recover the amount of money, which he has paid for the partnership; since he cannot sue them without suing himself, also, as one of the partnership. And, if one partner, in fraud of the partnership rights or credits, should release an action, that release would, at law, be obligatory upon all the partners. But a court of equity would not, under such circumstances, hesitate to relieve the partnership.⁴

§ 682. Courts of equity, in this respect, act upon principles familiarly recognized in the civil law, and in the jurisprudence of those nations which derive their law from that most extensive source. This will abundantly appear, by reference to the known jurisprudence of Scotland, and that of the continental nations of Europe.⁵ Indeed, it would be a matter, not merely of curiosity, but of solid instruction (if this were the proper place for such an examination), to trace out the strong lines of analogy between the

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Hayes v. Bement*, 3 Sandf. 394.

³ 6 Taunt. 597; 2 B. & P. 120.

⁴ *Ante*, § 504, note; *Jones v. Yates*, 9 B. & Cressw. 532, 538, 539, 540.

⁵ See 2 Bell, Com. B. 7, ch. 2, § 2, art. 1214.

law of partnership, as understood in England, and especially as administered in equity, and that of the Roman jurisprudence. Unexpected coincidences are everywhere to be found; while the differences are comparatively few; and, for the most part, these arise, rather from the different processes and forms of administering justice in different countries, than from any general diversity of principles.¹ Among other illustrations, we may cite the general doctrine, that the partnership property is first liable to the partnership debts; that the right of any one partner is only to his share of the surplus; that joint creditors have a priority or privilege of payment before separate creditors;² and that the estates of deceased partners are liable to contribute towards the payment of the joint debts.³

§ 683. This review of some of the more important cases in which courts of equity interfere in regard to partnerships, does (unless my judgment greatly misleads me) establish, in the most conclusive manner, the utter inadequacy of courts of law to administer justice in most cases, growing out of partnerships, and the indispensable necessity of resorting to courts of equity, for plain, complete, and adequate redress. Where a discovery, an account, a contribution, an injunction, or a dissolution is sought, in cases of partnership, or even where a due enforcement of partnership rights, and duties, and credits, is required, it is impossible not to perceive, that, generally, a resort to courts of law would be little more than a solemn mockery of justice. Hence, it can excite no surprise, that courts of equity now exercise a full concurrent jurisdiction with courts of law in all matters of partnership; and, indeed, it may be said, that, practically speaking, they exercise an exclusive jurisdiction over the subject in all cases of any complexity or difficulty.

[* § 683 *a*. It is sometimes a question of considerable difficulty, how far a court of equity will interfere, in one country, in regard to partnership transactions occurring in foreign jurisdictions. In

¹ To establish this statement, the learned reader may be referred to the Digest, Lib. 17, tit. 2, *Pro Socio*; and Voet, Com. ad id.; Vinnius, Comm. Inst. Lib. 3, tit. 26; 1 Domat, Civil Law, tit. *Partnership*, B. 1, tit. 8, per tot.; 2 Bell, Comm. B. 4, ch. 2, art. 1250 to 1263; Code Civil of France, art. 1832 to 1873; Pothier *Traité de Société*, per tot.

² 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 8, § 3, art. 10.

³ 1 Domat, B. 1, tit. 8, § 6, art. 1, 2; Pothier, *de Société*, n. 96, 136, 161, 162.

a suit,¹ therefore, where the subject-matter was immovable property situate in a foreign jurisdiction, being mining property, and where the contract sought to be enforced was entered into and to be performed in that country, and the defendants were domiciled there, it was held the courts of equity had no jurisdiction to entertain a suit. Sir J. Romilly, M. R., thus defines the jurisdiction of courts of equity: "The principles which govern this court upon questions of jurisdiction are analogous to those of the civil law, and the court will entertain a suit if the domicile of the defendant is within the territorial jurisdiction of the court, or if the subject-matter of the suit is within that jurisdiction, or if the contract sought to be enforced was entered into within that jurisdiction; but if neither of these circumstances exists the court has no jurisdiction."]

CHAPTER XVI.

MATTERS OF RENT.

[* § 684, 684 a. Equity grants relief for recovering rent, where there is no adequate remedy at law.

§ 685. Equity will not grant more extensive relief than the right at law.

§ 686. Advantage of resort to courts of equity.

§ 687. Will give relief where there is no personal obligation.]

§ 684. ANOTHER head of concurrent jurisdiction of the same nature, and resulting also from the imperfection of the remedy

¹ [* *Cookney v. Anderson*, 8 Jur. N. S. 1220; s. c. 31 Beav. 452; s. c. on Appeal affirmed by the Lord Chancellor, 9 Jur. N. S. 736. In this case process had been served upon the defendant out of the jurisdiction, under the English statute, and the defendant appealed and demurred to the bill for want of jurisdiction; and he was held entitled to his discharge, the same as if he had moved to discharge the order for personal service abroad, or the want of jurisdiction appeared upon the face of the bill. So also *Norris v. Chambres*, 29 Beav. 246; *Hawarden v. Dunlop*, 7 Law T. N. S. 237. See *Hendrick v. Wood*, 9 Jur. N. S. 117; *Maunder v. Lloyd*, 2 Johns. & H. 718; *Steele v. Stuart*, 12 W. R. 247. In some cases where one of the partners has brought money into the concern beyond the amount of capital stipulated in the articles, and the assets were not sufficient to pay back all the capital, such additional sums have been treated as debts and directed to be first paid. *Wood v. Scoles*, 12 Jur. N. S. 555.]

at law, is in the case of RENTS. This subject has been already touched in other places;¹ and a few particulars only will be here taken notice of, which have not been already fully discussed. Thus, for instance, in case of a rent seck, if the grantee has never had seisin, and the rent cannot be recovered at law, courts of equity will decree a seisin of the rent, and perhaps, also, that it be paid to the party.² So, if the deeds are lost, by which a rent is created, so that it is uncertain what kind of rent it was;³ or if (as we have seen), by reason of a confusion of boundaries, or otherwise, the lands out of which it issues cannot be exactly ascertained, courts of equity will, in like manner, interfere.⁴ So, if the remedy for the rent has become difficult or doubtful at law; or if there is an apparent perplexity and uncertainty as to the title, or as to the extent of the responsibility of the party, from whom it is sought; in all such cases, courts of equity will maintain jurisdiction, and upon a due ascertainment of the right, will decree the rent.⁵ So, if a rent is devised out of a rectory to a devisee, for

¹ *Ante*, § 508 to 515.

² Francis's Maxims, 6, § 3, p. 25 (edit. 1793); *Ferris v. Newby*, cited 1 Ch. Cas. 147; *Palmer v. Wettenhal*, 1 Ch. Cas. 184; 1 Fonbl. on Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3; Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 N. 1, *Rent*; *Thorndike v. Collington*, 1 Ch. Cas. 79; *Web v. Web*, Moore, 626; *Davy v. Davy*, 1 Ch. Cas. 147.

³ *Collet v. Jacques*, 1 Ch. Cas. 120; *Cocks v. Foley*, 1 Vern. 359; *Duke of Leeds v. New Radnor*, 2 Bro. Ch. 338, 518, 519; *Holder v. Chambury*, 3 P. Will. 256; *Livingston v. Livingston*, 4 Johns. Ch. 290, 291.

⁴ *Ante*, § 622; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3, note (*f*); Francis's Maxims, 6, § 3, p. 25 (edit. 1739); *Bowman v. Yeat*, cited 1 Ch. Cas. 145; *Davy v. Davy*, 1 Ch. Cas. 146, 147; *Cocks v. Foley*, 1 Vern. 359; *North v. Earl of Strafford*, 3 P. Will. 148; *Holder v. Chambury*, 3 P. Will. 256; Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 N. 1, *Rent*; *Duke of Bridgewater v. Edwards*, 4 Bro. Parl. Cas. 139; s. c. 6 Bro. Parl. Cas. by Tomlins, 368. As to the ancient remedy for Rents, see 3 Reeves's History of the Law, ch. 21, p. 317 to 320; 3 Black. Comm. 6; id. 231; 2 Black. Comm. 42; id. 288; Bacon, Abridg. *Rent*, A. K.

⁵ *Livingston v. Livingston*, 4 Johns. Ch. 287, 290. In *Benson v. Baldwyn* (1 Atk. 598), Lord Hardwicke said: "Where a man is entitled to a rent out of lands, and, through process of time, the remedy at law is lost, or become very difficult, this court has interfered and given relief upon the foundation only of payment of the rent for a long time, which bills are called bills founded upon the *sole*. Nay, the court has gone so far as to give relief, where the nature of the rent (as there are many kinds at law) has not been known so as to be set forth. But then, all the terre-tenants of the lands, out of which the rent issues, must be brought before the court, in order for the court to make a complete decree." See also *Collet v. Jacques*, 1 Ch. Cas. 120.

which he cannot have any remedy by distress, or otherwise, at law, courts of equity will decree him the rent not only in future, but all arrears.¹ So, if a lease of an incorporeal thing is assigned, and the assignee enjoys it, he will be decreed, in equity, to pay the rent, although not bound at law.² So, if an assignee of a term, rendering rent, assigns over, the lessor will be entitled to relief in equity for the rent against the first assignee, so long as he held the land, although he may have no remedy at law for these arrears.³ So, the executor of a terre-tenant of lands liable for a rent-charge, which the terre-tenant has suffered to be in arrear, will be compellable, in equity, to pay the same, although the testator was not personally bound for the rent, which was recoverable only by distress; for his personal estate has been augmented by the non-payment.⁴ So, a *cestui que trust* of a lease, rendering rent, will, in equity, be compellable to pay the rent during the time, wherein he has taken the profits, if his trustee (the lessee) has become insolvent.⁵ So, although a grantee of a rent shall not have a remedy in equity merely for the want of a distress; yet, if the want of such distress be caused by the fraud or other default of the tenant, there, he will be relieved in equity.⁶ So, if a rent is settled upon a woman by way of jointure, but she has no power of distress or other remedy at law; payment of the rent will be decreed, in equity, according to the intent of the conveyance.⁷

¹ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 N. 1, *Rent*; *Thorndike v. Collington*, 1 Ch. Cas. 79.

² Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 N. 1, *Rent*, which cites *City of London v. Richmond*, 2 Vern. 423; s. c. 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. 30; [id. 516, Tomlins's edit.]

³ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 N. 1, *Rent*, which cites *Treackle v. Coke*, 1 Vern. 165; *Valliant v. Dodemede*, 2 Atk. 546, 548; *Richmond v. City of London*, 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. 30 [id. 516, Tomlins, edit.]; s. c. 2 Vern. 422, 423.

⁴ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 N. 1, *Rent*, which cites *Eton College v. Beauchamp*, 1 Ch. Cas. 121.

⁵ *Clavering v. Westley*, 3 P. Will. 402. [* This case came under consideration recently in the Court of Appeal in chancery, in *Walters v. The Northern Coal-Mining Company*, when the Lord Chancellor said in regard to Lord Talbot's decision in *Clavering v. Westley*: "If it be taken as laying down a general proposition, that whenever a legal lessee is trustee for another, the rent becomes an equitable debt from the *cestui que trust*, to be recovered by a bill in this court, I must, with all respect, say it is a proposition to which I cannot assent." 5 De G., M. & G. 629, 646, 647.]

⁶ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 N. 3, *Rent*; *Davy v. Davy*, 1 Ch. Cas. 144, 147; *Ferris v. Newby*, cited 1 Ch. Cas. 147; *Ferrers v. Tanner*, cited 3 Ch. Cas. 91.

⁷ Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 115, 116; *Plunket v. Brereton*, 1 Rep. in Chan. 5; *Champernoon v. Gubbs*, 1 Vern. 382.

So, where a person is a guarantee of an entire rent, issuing out of a manor, and there are no demesne lands to distrain on, the rent will be decreed in equity.¹

§ 684 *a*. This jurisdiction, in matters of rent, is asserted upon the general principle, that where there is a right, there ought to be a remedy; and, if the law gives none, it ought to be administered in equity.² This principle is of frequent application in equity; but still it is not to be understood as of universal application, as its terms seem to import, for there are limitations upon it. An obvious exception is, where a man becomes remediless at law from his own negligence.³ So, if he should destroy his own remedy to distrain for rent, and debt would not lie for the arrears of rent, he would not be relievable in equity.⁴

§ 684 *b*. Courts of equity have, in some cases, carried their remedial justice farther in aid of parties entitled to rent. It is plain enough, that they may well give relief where a bill for discovery and relief is filed, and the discovery is essential to the plaintiff's case, and the defendant admits the right of the plaintiff to the rent; for, in such a case the relief may well be held to be consequent upon the discovery.⁵ But, where no special ground of this sort has been stated in the bill, and where, upon the circumstances, there might well have been a remedy at law, courts of equity have in some cases gone on to decree the rent, when the defendant has by his answer admitted the plaintiff's right, and no exception has been taken to the jurisdiction by demurrer or by answer, but simply at the hearing.⁶

§ 684 *c*. These latter cases seem to stand upon grounds, which, if not questionable, may at least be deemed anomalous. The general doctrine of courts of equity certainly is, that, where the party, entitled to rent, has a complete remedy at law, either by an action or by distress, no suit will be entertained in equity for his relief;⁷ and the cases, in which a suit in equity is commonly en-

¹ *Duke of Leeds v. Powell*, 1 Ves. 171.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3, note (*f*) and cases before cited.

³ *Francis's Maxims*, 6, § 3, p. 25 (edit. 1739); *Vincent v. Beverlye*, Noy, 82; 1 Fonbl. on Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3.

⁴ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3; 1 Roll. Abridg. 375, Pl. 3.

⁵ *Ante*, § 71; *post*, § 690, 691, 1483; *Story on Eq. Pl.* § 311, 312, 314, 315.

⁶ *Duke of Leeds v. New Radnor*, 2 Bro. Ch. 338, 518; *North v. Earl of Strafford*, 3 P. Will. 184; *Holder v. Chambury*, 3 P. Will. 256; *Livingston v. Livingston*, 4 Johns. Ch. 287, 291, 292.

⁷ *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 N. 3, *Bent*; *Palmer v. Wettenthal*, 1 Ch. Cas. 184;

retained, are of the kind above mentioned, namely, such as stand upon some peculiar equity between the parties; or where the remedy at law is gone without laches; or where it is inadequate or doubtful.¹ It is not enough to show that the remedy in equity may be more beneficial, if the remedy at law is complete and adequate;² or, even to show, that the remedy at law by distress is gone, if there be no fraud or default in the tenant.³

§ 685. But, in cases of rent, where courts of equity do interfere, they do not grant a remedy beyond what, by analogy to the law, ought to be granted. As, for instance, if an annuity be granted out of a rectory, and charged thereon, and the glebe be worth less per annum than the annuity, courts of equity will make the whole rectory, and not merely the glebe, liable for the annuity.⁴ But

Francis's Maxims, 6, § 3, p. 25 (edit. 1739), marg. note; *Champernoon v. Gubbs*, 2 Vern. 382; *Fairfax v. Derby*, 2 Vern. 613; *Holder v. Chambury*, 3 P. Will. 266; *Duke of Leeds v. New Radnor*, 2 Bro. Ch. 338, and Mr. Belt's note, id. 519; *Bouverie v. Prentice*, 1 Bro. Ch. 200.

¹ *Ante*, § 684. Mr. Fonblanque, in commenting on the case of *The Duke of Leeds v. New Radnor*, 2 Bro. Ch. 338, 519, has said: "The case of the Duke of Leeds v. Corporation of New Radnor may, in its first impression, be thought to have been relievable at law; for though, for the purpose of making it the subject of equitable jurisdiction, the bill alleged that the lands in question had undergone various alterations in their boundaries, yet the defendants, by their answer, denied that any alteration whatever had taken place in such particulars, and insisted that the plaintiff's remedy was at law. And Lord Kenyon, then Master of the Rolls, appears to have been of such opinion, but he retained the bill for a year. Lord Thurlow, C., however, conceived the legal remedy to be doubtful, and was of opinion, that the defendants having admitted the plaintiff's right, and the bill having been retained, had done away the objection pressed against the jurisdiction of the court. It may be material to observe, that his lordship's opinion went upon the grounds of an admission of the right, and the previous retaking of the bill. As to the admission of the right, if it stood alone, that, probably, would not be thought a sufficient circumstance to give to a court of equity cognizance of a matter not properly within its jurisdiction; and, with respect to the bill having been retained for a year, the same circumstance occurred in *Ryan v. Macmath*, 3 Bro. 15, notwithstanding which the suit was dismissed for want of equity. See also *Curtis v. Curtis*, 2 Bro. 620, where this point was very much considered."

² Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 N. 3, *Rent*; *Attorney General v. Mayor of Coventry*, 1 Vern. 713.

³ Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 N. 3, *Rent*; *Davy v. Davy*, 1 Ch. Cas. 144, 147; *Champernoon v. Gubbs*, 2 Vern. 382; *Francis's Maxims*, 6, § 3, p. 35 (edit. 1739), marginal note; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 3; *Duke of Bolton v. Deane*, Prec. Ch. 516.

⁴ *Thorndike v. Collington*, 1 Ch. Cas. 79; Com. Digest, Chancery, 4 N. 3 *Rent*.

they will not extend the remedy to the tithes, they not being by law liable to a distress.¹ So, if a rent be charged on land only, the party, who comes into possession of it will not be personally charged with the payment of it, unless there be some fraud on his part to remove the stock, or he do some other thing to evade the right of distress.²

§ 686. Before the statute of Anne (8 Ann. ch. 14), it was often necessary to go into a court of equity in cases of a rent seck, for a suitable remedy.³ But that statute, and other subsequent statutes, enable the party, in all cases, whether the rent be a rent service, or a rent seck, or a rent charge, to distrain or bring his action of debt.⁴ The remedy in equity is, therefore, in a practical sense, narrowed; or, rather, it is less advisable than formerly. Still, however (as Mr. Fonblanque has properly remarked), there are cases in which a resort to a court of equity may be salutary, and, perhaps, indispensable; as, where the premises, out of which the rent is payable, are uncertain;⁵ or where the time or amount of payment is uncertain; or where (as already hinted) the distress is obstructed or evaded by fraud;⁶ or where the rent is issuing out of a thing of an incorporeal nature, as tithes, where no distress can be made;⁷ or where a discovery may be necessary; or where an apportionment may be required, in order to attain complete justice.⁸

§ 687. The beneficial effect of this jurisdiction in equity may be further illustrated by reference to the doctrine at law in cases of derivative titles under leases. It is well known, that, although a derivative lessee, or under-tenant, is liable to be distrained for rent during his possession; yet, he is not liable to be sued for rent on

¹ *Ibid.*; *Thorndike v. Collington*, 1 Ch. Cas. 79; *Francis's Maxims*, 6, p. 25 (edit. 1739), in margin.

² *Ibid.*; *Palmer v. Wettenhal*, 1 Ch. Cas. 184; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 N. 3, *Rent*; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 3, ch. 2, § 3, note (*k*); *Davy v. Davy*, 1 Ch. Cas. 144, 145; *s. p.* 3 Ch. Cas. 91.

³ See 3 *Reeves, Hist. of the Law*, ch. 21, p. 316 to 320; *Litt.* § 218.

⁴ *Stat.* 4 *Geo. II.* ch. 28; 5 *Geo. III.* ch. 17; 3 *Black. Comm.* 6; *id.* 230 to 233; *Bac. Abridg. Rent*, K. 6.

⁵ *Benson v. Baldwyn*, 1 *Atk.* 595; *ante*, § 684; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 N. 1, *Rent*.

⁶ *Champernoon v. Gubbs*, 2 *Vern.* 382; *s. c. Prec. Ch.* 126; *ante*, § 684, 685.

⁷ 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 1, ch. 3, § 3, note (*g*) and cases there cited.

⁸ See *North v. Earl of Strafford*, 3 *P. Will.* 148, 151; *Benson v. Baldwyn*, 1 *Atk.* 598; *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 4 N. 3, *Rent*.

the covenants of the lease; there being no privity of contract between him and the lessor.¹ But suppose the case to be, that the original lessee is insolvent, and unable to pay the rent; the question would then arise, whether the under-lessee should be permitted to enjoy the profits and possession of the estate, without accounting for the rent to the original lessor. Undoubtedly there would be no remedy at law. But it is understood, that, in such a case, courts of equity would relieve the lessor; and would direct a payment of the rent to the lessor, upon a bill making the original lessee, and the under-tenant, parties. For, if the original lessee were compelled to pay the rent, he would have a remedy over against the under-tenant. And besides, in the eyes of a court of equity, the rent seems properly to be a trust or charge upon the estate; and the lessor is bound, at least, in conscience, not to take the profits without a due discharge of the rent out of them.²

CHAPTER XVII.

PECULIAR REMEDIES IN EQUITY — DISCOVERY — CANCELLATION AND DELIVERY OF INSTRUMENTS.

[* § 688. Cases where the peculiar remedy gives jurisdiction.

§ 689. Bills for discovery merely.

§ 690, 691. Grounds of jurisdiction with reference to discovery stated.

§ 692. Rescission of contracts; cancellation of securities.

§ 693. Relief in such cases rests in legal discretion.

§ 694. Fraud is the most usual basis of such relief.

§ 694 a. Recent cases upon the subject examined.

§ 695, 695 a. Subject classified and illustrated.

§ 696. The party in fault must always make restitution.

§ 697. And if equally in fault can have no relief.

§ 698. If the contract is void, no need of relief commonly.

§ 699, 700. Nevertheless, equity interferes on various grounds.

§ 700 a. An instrument, void on its face, will not be ground of relief.

§ 701. The jurisdiction rests on the prevention of injury.

¹ *Halford v. Hetch*, 1 Doug. 183; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, note (e); Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 N. 5, *Rent*.

² See *Goddard v. Keate*, 1 Vern. 27; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 5, § 5, and note (x); *ante*, § 684; Com. Dig. Chancery, 4 N. 1, 4 N. 2, *Rent*.

- § 702. Courts of equity now try the facts in such cases.
 § 703. Will interpose for the recovery of deeds and other writings.
 § 704. Or to give inspection and copies to those interested in title.
 § 705. Will decree the surrender of paid securities, &c.
 § 705 a. Courts of equity will compel grantor to surrender mortgage to grantee.
 § 705 b, 706. Or where circumstances indicate the party does not rely upon them.
 § 706 a. Equity will not complete an imperfect gift. What constitutes consideration.
 § 706 b. Voluntary gifts may be set aside in equity.
 § 707. Party seeking relief in equity must first do equity.
 § 708. Will not ordinarily decree delivery of specific chattels.
 § 709. But will so decree, where no other adequate compensation.
 § 710. Other cases of equitable interference to prevent irreparable mischief.
 § 710 a. How far machinery will be treated as fixtures.
 § 711. Equity formerly decreed compensation in some cases.]

§ 688. WE shall now proceed to the consideration of the other branch of concurrent jurisdiction, that in which the peculiar remedies afforded by courts of equity constitute the principal, although not the sole, ground of jurisdiction.

§ 689. And here we may begin by adverting to that large class of cases, where the remedy of a DISCOVERY constitutes the main ground, and, in many cases, the sole ground, upon which a bill in equity is maintainable in point of jurisdiction. Every original bill in equity may, in truth, be properly deemed a bill of discovery; for it seeks a disclosure of circumstances relative to the plaintiff's case. But that, which is usually and emphatically distinguished by this appellation, is a bill for the discovery of facts, resting in the knowledge of the defendant, or of deeds, or writings, or other things, in his custody, possession, or power, but seeking no relief in consequence of the discovery, although it may pray, and often does pray, for a stay of proceedings at law, until the discovery shall be made.¹ Wherever such a discovery alone is sought, without asking any relief, courts of equity have a complete jurisdiction to compel the discovery, if the plaintiff is entitled to it, according to the general principles which govern the subject. Courts of law are incompetent, by their very structure, to compel such a discovery; and, therefore, it properly falls under the head of the exclusive jurisdiction of courts of equity, where the nature and limits of the right to a discovery will be fully examined.²

¹ Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 53, 183 to 185; *post*, § 1483; Cooper, Eq. Pl. ch. 1, § 4, p. 58; *id.* ch. 3, § 3, p. 188; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 2, ch. 1, p. 257, &c.; 2 Fonbl. Eq. B. 6, ch. 3, § 1, &c.; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 160, &c.; Story on Equity Plead. § 311, 312, 315.

² *Post*, § 1480 to 1605.

§ 690. But the class of cases designed to be treated of in this place, are cases where relief is sought, as consequent upon the discovery of facts, and where, but for the want of such discovery, the case would be perfectly remediable at law. The necessity of obtaining a discovery in such cases, therefore, constitutes the sole ground of equity jurisdiction; and if, upon such a bill, no discovery is obtained, the cause fails, and the bill must be dismissed. If, on the other hand, the discovery is obtained (then as we have already seen), courts of equity, in many cases, will proceed to give entire and full relief. This subject has been already treated somewhat at length in the preliminary part of these Commentaries;¹ and, therefore, the ground of this jurisdiction may be briefly summed up in the language of Mr. Fonblanque, in a passage from which a short quotation has been already made: "This concurrence of jurisdiction" [by courts of equity], says he, "may, in the greater number of cases in which it is exercised, be justified by the propriety of preventing a multiplicity of suits; for, as the mode of proceeding in courts of law requires the plaintiff to establish his case, without enabling him to draw the necessary evidence from the examination of the defendant, justice could never be obtained at law in those cases where the principal facts, to be proved by one party, are confined to the knowledge of the other party. In such cases, therefore, it becomes necessary for the party, wanting such evidence, to resort to the extraordinary powers of a court of equity, which will compel the necessary discovery. And the court, having acquired cognizance of the suit for the purpose of discovery, will entertain it for the purpose of relief in most cases of fraud, account, accident, and mistake."²

§ 691. We have already seen, that there is a difference between the English and the American courts, in regard to the extent of the jurisdiction, attaching for relief, as consequent upon discovery.³ But, whichever doctrine ought, upon principle, to prevail, there is no doubt of the two propositions above stated: first, that the necessity of a discovery in a court of equity furnishes a just foundation of jurisdiction in a great variety of cases;⁴ and, sec-

¹ *Ante*, § 64 to 74 *e*; *post*, § 1483; Story on Eq. Plead. § 311 to 316.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (*f*), p. 12.

³ *Ante*, § 71, 74 *d*.

⁴ 74 *d*. See Lord Eldon's remarks, in *Kemp v. Pryor*, 7 Ves. 248, 249. In *Pearce v. Creswick*, 2 Hare, 293, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Wigram said: "The first

only, that if the discovery is totally denied by the answer, the bill must be dismissed, and the relief denied, although there might be other evidence sufficient to establish a title to relief; for the subject-matter is, under such circumstances, exclusively remediable at law. With these few remarks, the further consideration of this subject may be dismissed in this place.

§ 692. Another head of equity jurisdiction, founded upon the like circumstance of a peculiar remedy, embraces that large class of cases, where the RESCISSION, CANCELLATION, or DELIVERY UP of agreements, securities, or deeds is sought, or a SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE is required of the terms of such agreements, securities, or deeds, as indispensable to reciprocal justice. It is obvious that courts of law are utterly incompetent to make a specific decree for any relief of this sort;¹ and, without it, the most serious mischiefs

proposition relied upon by the plaintiff, in support of the equity of his bill, is this, — that the case was one in which the right to discovery would carry with it the right to relief. And, undoubtedly, dicta are to be met with, tending directly to the conclusion, that the right to discovery may entitle a plaintiff to relief also." In *Adley v. The Whitstable Company*, 17 Ves. 324, Lord Eldon says: "There is no mode of ascertaining what is due, except an account in a court of equity; but it is said the party may have discovery, and then go to law. The answer to that is, that the right to discovery carries along with it the right to relief in equity." In *Ryle v. Haggie*, 1 J. & W. 236, Sir Thomas Plumer said: "When it is admitted that a party comes here properly for the discovery, the court is never disposed to occasion a multiplicity of suits, by making him go to a court of law for the relief." And, in *M'Kenzie v. Johnson*, 4 Mad. 373, Sir J. Leach says: "The plaintiff can only learn from this discovery of the defendants, how they have acted in the execution of their agency; and it would be most unreasonable that he should pay them for that discovery, if it turned out that they had abused his confidence; yet such must be the case if a bill for relief will not lie." Now, in a case in which I think that justice requires the court, if possible, to find an equity in this bill, to enable it once for all to decide the question between the parties, I should reluctantly deprive the plaintiff of any equity to which the dicta I have referred to may entitle him. But I confess that the argument founded upon these dicta appears to me to be exposed to the objection of proving too much. They can only be reconciled with the ordinary practice of the court, by understanding them as having been uttered with reference, in each case, to the subject-matter to which they were applied, and not as laying down any abstract proposition so wide as the plaintiff's argument requires. I think this part of the plaintiff's case cannot be stated more highly in his favor than this, — that the necessity a party may be under (from the very nature of a given transaction) to come into equity for discovery, is a circumstance to be regarded in deciding upon the distinct and independent question of equitable jurisdiction; further than this I have not been able to follow this branch of the plaintiff's argument."

¹ *Bromley v. Holland*, 7 Ves. 18.

may often arise to the parties interested. The subject naturally divides itself into two great branches. In the first place, what are the cases in which courts of equity will undertake to rescind, cancel, or direct a surrender of contracts, securities, and deeds? And, in the second place, what are the cases in which courts of equity will enforce a specific performance of them?

§ 693. Before proceeding to the consideration of these distinct and important subjects, it may be proper to suggest, that the application to a court of equity for either of these purposes is not, strictly speaking, a matter of absolute right, upon which the court is bound to pass a final decree. But it is a matter of sound discretion, to be exercised by the court, either in granting or in refusing the relief prayed, according to its own notion of what is reasonable and proper under all the circumstances of the particular case.¹ Thus, for instance, a court of equity will sometimes refuse to decree a specific performance of an agreement, which it will yet decline to order to be delivered up, cancelled, or rescinded.² On the other hand, a specific performance will be decreed upon the application of one party, when it would be denied upon the application of the other. And an agreement will be rescinded or cancelled upon the application of one party, when the court would decline any interference at the instance of the other.³ So that we are here to understand, that the interference of a court of equity is a matter of mere discretion; not, indeed, of arbitrary and capricious discretion, but of sound and reasonable discretion, *secundum arbitrium boni judicis*.⁴ And in all cases of this sort, where the interposition of a court of equity is sought, the court will, in granting relief, impose such terms upon the party as it deems the real justice of the case to require; and, if the plaintiff refuses to comply with such terms, his bill will be dismissed.⁵ The maxim here is emphatically applied, — He who seeks equity must do equity.

§ 694. In the first place, then, let us consider in what cases a

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 9, note (i); 3 Wooddes. Lect. 58, p. 464, 465, 466; *Mortlock v. Buller*, 10 Ves. 293; s. c. 2 Dow, 518.

² See *M'Leod v. Drummond*, 17 Ves. 167; *Savage v. Brocksopp*, 18 Ves. 335; *Mortlock v. Buller*, 10 Ves. 305, 308; *Turner v. Harvey, Jacob*, 178; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 58, p. 454, 455.

³ *Cooke v. Clayworth*, 18 Ves. 12; 1 Story on Eq. Jurisp. § 206.

⁴ *Goring v. Nash*, 3 Ask. 188; *Buckle v. Mitchell*, 18 Ves. 111; *Revell v. Hussey*, 2 B. & B. 288; *post*, § 742, 769.

⁵ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 4, note (a); *id.* B. 1, ch. 2, § 11, note (p).

court of equity will direct the Delivery up, Cancellation, or Rescission of agreements, securities, deeds, or other instruments. It is obvious, that the jurisdiction, exercised in cases of this sort, is founded upon the administration of a protective or preventive justice. The party is relieved upon the principle, as it is technically called, *quia timet*; that is, for fear that such agreements, securities, deeds, or other instruments may be vexatiously or injuriously used against him, when the evidence to impeach them may be lost; or that they may now throw a cloud or suspicion over his title or interest.¹ *A fortiori*, the party will have a right to come into equity to have such agreements, securities, deeds, or other instruments delivered up and cancelled, where he has a defence against them, which is good in equity, but not capable of being made available at law.² We have already had occasion to take notice of a great variety of cases, in which agreements, securities, deeds, and other instruments have been set aside, and decreed to be delivered up, on the ground of accident, mistake, and fraud.³ Under the two former heads, it will readily be perceived, upon the slightest examination, that a rescission, or cancellation of the agreements, securities, deeds, or other instruments, would not, in a great many cases, be an appropriate, adequate, or equitable relief. The accident or mistake may be of a nature which does not go to the very foundation and merits of the agreement; but may only require, that some amendment, addition, qualification, or variation should take place, to make it once just and reasonable, and fit to be enforced.⁴ But it can rarely be said, that in cases of fraud, actual or constructive, the same observations properly apply. If there is actual fraud, there seems the strongest ground for the interference of a court of equity to rescind a contract, security, or other instrument.⁵ And if the fraud be constructive, still for the most part it ought to draw after it the same consequences, either as a breach of trust, or an abandonment of

¹ Newland on Contracts, ch. 34, p. 493, &c.; *post*, § 700, 701; *Petit v. Shepherd*, 5 Paige, 493. See *Burt v. Cassety*, 12 Ala. 734.

² *Reed v. Bank of Newburgh*, 1 Paige, 215, 218.

³ *Ante*, § 161, 439; *Willan v. Willan*, 16 Ves. 72; *Underhill v. Horwood*, 10 Ves. 225; *Ware v. Horwood*, 14 Ves. 28, 31, 32.

⁴ See *Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 127, 128, 129, and note (*u*); *Skillern's Executors v. May's Executors*, 4 Cranch, 137; *Boyce's Executors v. Grundy*, 3 Peters, 210.

⁵ See *Rumph v. Abercrombie*, 12 Ala. 64; *Sheppard v. Ireson*, 12 Ala. 97.

duty, or a violation of public policy.¹ But although fraud may, in all these cases, furnish a sufficient ground to rescind a contract, *in jure strictissimo*; yet there may be circumstances which may justly mitigate the rigid severity of the law; or may place the parties *in pari delicto*; or may require a court of equity, from the demerit of the plaintiff in the particular transaction, to abstain from the slightest interference; or may even induce it, if it should rescind the contract, to do so only upon the terms of due compensation, and the allowance of the countervailing equities of the plaintiff.²

[* § 694 a. But in all cases where the cancellation or surrender of a contract is sought on the ground of fraud, courts of equity should, it is said, maintain the principle that no relief be given, unless a distinct case of fraud be definitely alleged, and clearly proved as alleged.³ But where an illiterate old man, in a feeble state of health, and within thirty-six hours of his death, executed a deed of conveyance for insufficient consideration, and without the assistance of independent professional advice, the transaction was set aside at the instance of the heir of the vendor, and the deed ordered to be delivered up to be cancelled.⁴ So also where an unmarried lady made a deed in favor of her brother, with whom she was residing at the time, the same being executed by her without professional advice, it was set aside at the instance of the lady and her husband.⁵ And in the same case the sale of reversionary property was set aside on the ground of under-value, as between the same parties, notwithstanding the lapse of more than ten years, the vendor continuing under the influence of the vendee until within two years of the bill being filed. But in the case of family arrangements, where there was no proof of undue influence, the court declined to interfere.⁶ But such contracts will not be set aside after they have been acquiesced in and acted upon so that the parties cannot be restored to their original rights.⁷ And

¹ *Thompson v. Graham*, 1 Paige, 384.

² *Ante*, § 50; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 3, note (h); *Holbrook v. Sharpey*, 19 Ves. 131; *Harding v. Handy*, 11 Wheat. 125, 126.

³ [* *Martyn v. Westbrook*, 7 Law T. n. s. 449.

⁴ *Clark v. Malpas*, 8 Jur. n. s. 734; s. c. 31 Beav. 80.

⁵ *Sharp v. Leach*, 8 Jur. n. s. 1026; s. c. 31 Beav. 491.

⁶ *Bentley v. Mackay*, 8 Jur. n. s. 857; s. c. affirmed 8 Jur. n. s. 1001; s. c. 31 Beav. 143.

⁷ *Ormes v. Beadel*, 2 De G., F. & J. 333. See also *Croft v. Graham*, 9 Jur. n. s. 1032; *Tottenham v. Green*, 32 Law J. n. s. Ch. 201.

in the absence of all fraud, and where the contract is no cloud upon title or any special embarrassment, the courts will not ordinarily interfere.¹]

§ 695. Without attempting to go over the different classes of cases of fraud (which have been already enumerated), it may be stated, that courts of equity will generally set aside, cancel, and direct to be delivered up, agreements and other instruments, however solemn in their form of operation, where they are voidable, and not merely void, under the following circumstances: First, where there is actual fraud in the party defendant, in which the party plaintiff has not participated. Secondly, where there is a constructive fraud against public policy, and the party plaintiff has not participated therein. Thirdly, where there is a fraud against public policy, and the party plaintiff has participated therein, but public policy would be defeated by allowing it to stand. And, lastly, where there is a constructive fraud by both parties, but they are not *in pari delicto*.²

§ 695 *a*. The first two classes of cases seem scarcely to require any illustration; since it is manifestly a result of natural justice, that a party ought not to be permitted to avail himself of any agreement, deed, or other instrument procured by his own actual or constructive fraud, or by his own violation of legal duty or public policy, to the prejudice of an innocent party. The third class may be illustrated by the common case of a gaming security, which will be decreed to be given up, notwithstanding both parties have participated in the violation of the law; because public policy will be best subserved by such a course.³ The fourth class may also be illustrated by cases, where, although both parties have partici-

¹ *Onions v. Cohen*, 2 H. & M. 354; s. c. 11 Jur. n. s. 198; *Hoghton v. Money*, 13 Law T. n. s. 447.]

² See *ante*, § 298 to 381; *Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 128, 129, and notes; 3 *Wooddes. Lect.* 58, p. 458, 459, and note; *Hannington v. Du Chatel*, 1 Bro. Ch. 124; s. c. 2 Dick. 581; s. c. more full, 2 *Swanst.* 159, note; *St John v. St. John*, 11 Ves. 535, 536; *Wynne v. Callander*, 1 Russ. 293; *Jackman v. Mitchell*, 13 Ves. 581, 583; *Fanning v. Dunham*, 5 Johns. Ch. 136, 142; *Earl of Milltown v. Stewart*, 3 Mylne & Craig, 18, 24; *ante*, § 302; *Thompson v. Graham*, 1 Paige, 384; *Seymour v. Delancy*, 3 Cowen, 445; *MacCabe v. Hussey*, 2 Dow & Clark, 440; s. c. 5 Bligh, 715.

³ *Ante*, § 302; *Earl of Milltown v. Stewart*, 3 Mylne & Craig, 18, 24; *Wynne v. Callander*, 1 Russ. 293. See as to gaining securities given in a foreign country, *Quarrier v. Colston*, 1 Phillips, Ch. 147.

pated in the guilty transaction, yet, the party who seeks relief has acted under circumstances of oppression, imposition, hardship, undue influence, or great inequality of age or condition; so that in a moral as well as in a legal point of view, his guilt may well be deemed far less dark in its character and degree than that of his associate.¹

§ 696. But in many cases, where the instrument is declared void by positive law, and also, where it is held void or voidable upon other principles, courts of equity will impose terms upon the party, if the circumstances of the case require it. Thus, as we have seen, in cases of usury, courts of equity will not interpose in favor of the borrower, except upon the payment or allowance of the debt fairly due.² So, in cases of the setting aside and cancellation, and delivery up of annuity securities because they are not duly registered, courts of equity will direct an account of all receipts and payments on each side, and require the just balance to be paid by the proper party.³ And similar principles are applied to other cases, where the transaction is deemed indefensible, and yet there is an equitable right to compensation.⁴

§ 697. On the other hand, where the party seeking relief is the sole guilty party, or where he has participated equally and deliberately in the fraud; or where the agreement, which he seeks to set aside, is founded in illegality, immorality, or base and unconscionable conduct on his own part; in such cases courts of equity will leave him to the consequences of his own iniquity; and will decline to assist him to escape from the toils which he has studiously prepared to entangle others, or whereby he has sought to violate with impunity the best interests and morals of social life.⁵ And if acts of this sort have been deliberately done, under circumstances in which innocence has been betrayed, or confidence seduced, or falsehood or concealment systematically practised, *à fortiori*, courts of equity could not without staining the administra-

¹ *Ante*, § 298, 300, 301.

² *Ante*, § 302.

³ *Holbrook v. Sharpey*, 19 Ves. 131; *Bromley v. Holland*, 5 Ves. 618; s. c. 7 Ves. 16 to 28; *Byne v. Vivian*, 5 Ves. 606, 607; *Byne v. Potter*, 5 Ves. 609.

⁴ See *Harding v. Handy*, 11 Wheat. 103, 125, 126.

⁵ See *ante*, § 298 to 305. See also *Franco v. Bolton*, 3 Ves. Jr. 368 to 372; *St. John v. St. John*, 11 Ves. 535, 536; *Brackenbury v. Brackenbury*, 2 Jac. & Walk. 391; *Gray v. Mathias*, 5 Ves. Jr. 286; *Benyon v. Nettlefield*, 2 Eng. Law & Eq. 117.

tion of justice, interfere to save the party from the just results of his own gross misconduct, when the failure of success in the scheme would manifestly be the sole cause of his praying relief.

§ 698. A question has often occurred, how far courts of equity would or ought to interfere to direct deeds and other solemn instruments to be delivered up and cancelled, which are utterly void, and not merely voidable.¹ The doubt has been, in the first place, whether, as an instrument utterly void is incapable of being enforced at law, it is not a case where the remedial justice to protect the party may not be deemed adequate and complete at law, and therefore where the necessity of the interposition of courts of equity is obviated.² [Upon this principle, a court of equity has refused to set aside a sale made by an administrator, without an order of the proper court; the deed being absolutely void, there is an adequate remedy at law.³] And, in the next place, whether, if the instrument be void, and ought not to be enforced, the more appropriate remedy in a court of equity would not be, to order a perpetual injunction to restrain the use of the instrument, rather than to compel a delivery up and cancellation of the instrument.⁴

§ 699. Where the party is seeking a discovery as the means of arriving at relief, by the delivery up or cancellation of the void instrument, it seems somewhat difficult to understand, why a court of equity, having acquired a full jurisdiction in the case for discovery, should not, when that is obtained, proceed, for the purpose of preventing multiplicity of suits, to make a decree for the relief sought.⁵ But, where no discovery is sought, and the

¹ See Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 129, and note (x); 2 Swanst. 159, note (b); Bromley v. Holland, 5 Ves. 618, 619; s. c. 7 Ves. 18, 19; Simpson v. Lord Howden, 3 Mylne & Craig, 102, 103; Colman v. Sarrel, 1 Ves. Jr. 50.

² Hilton v. Barrow, 1 Ves. Jr. 284; Ryan v. Mackmath, 3 Bro. Ch. 15, 16, Mr. Belt's note (1), and Pierce v. Webb, there cited, p. 16, note (2); Jervis v. White, 7 Ves. 413, 414; Gray v. Mathias, 5 Ves. 293, 294; Bromley v. Holland, 5 Ves. 618, 619; Peirsoll v. Elliot, 6 Peters, 95, 98.

³ Mawhorter v. Armstrong, 16 Ohio, 188. See also Thigpen v. Pitt, 1 Jones, Eq. 49.

⁴ Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 129, and note (x); Jervis v. White, 7 Ves. 414; Hannington v. Du Chatel, 1 Bro. Ch. 124; s. c. 2 Dick. 581, and more fully 2 Swanst. 159, note.

⁵ See Newman v. Milner, 3 Ves. Jr. 483; *ante*, § 64 to 74, 690, 694; *post*, § 1483.

naked case, made by the bill, is for a mere delivery up or cancellation of the instrument, not averring any defect of proof, but simply stating that the instrument is void; there might be more color for some scruple in entertaining the bill.¹ [And the delivery up of a written instrument of a former closed indebtedness, which remained in adverse hands, but upon which no action or claim in equity existed, has been refused, where the only ground alleged was a fear of a subsequent suit upon it, or an injury to the complainant's credit, if the document were exhibited.²] Still, in the former case, the specific relief required being such as a court of law cannot give, and yet the instrument being, from its very nature, and its apparent validity, calculated to throw some doubt upon the title, or being capable of future misuse, the justice of a court of equity would seem to require, even under such circumstances, an interposition to prevent serious mischiefs.³

§ 700. But whatever may have been the doubts or difficulties formerly entertained upon this subject, they seem by the more modern decisions to be fairly put at rest; and the jurisdiction is now maintained in the fullest extent.⁴ And these decisions are founded on the true principles of equity jurisprudence, which is not merely remedial, but is also preventive of injustice. If an instrument ought not to be used or enforced, it is against conscience for the party holding it to retain it; since he can only retain it for some sinister purpose. If it is a negotiable instrument, it may be used for a fraudulent or improper purpose, to the injury of a third

¹ See *Gray v. Mathias*, 5 Ves. 286; *Franco v. Bolton*, 3 Ves. 368.

² *Wilkes v. Wilkes*, 4 Edw. Ch. 630.

³ *Hamilton v. Cummings*, 1 Johns. Ch. 520 to 524; *Hawkshaw v. Parkins*, 2 Swanst. 546.

⁴ *Hamilton v. Cummings*, 1 Johns. Ch. 520 to 524, and the cases there cited. *The Chautauque County Bank v. White*, 6 Barbour, S. C. 605; *Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 128, 129, and notes; *Mr. Swanston's note to Davis v. Duke of Marlborough*, 2 Swanst. 157, note (b); *St. John v. St. John*, 11 Ves. 526; *Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 127 to 130; 1 *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 186 to 190; *Simpson v. Lord Howden*, 3 Mylne & Craig, 104, 105; *Mayor of Colchester v. Lowton*, 1 Ves. & Beam. 244; *Bromley v. Holland*, 7 Ves. 16, 19, 20, 21; *Hayward v. Dimsdale*, 17 Ves. 112; *Pierce v. Webb*, cited in *Mr. Belt's edit. of 4 Bro. Ch.* 116, note; *Williams v. Flight*, 5 Beavan, 41. See *Mr. Belt's notes to Ryan v. Mackmath*, 3 Bro. Ch. 15; *Chennel v. Churchman*, cited *id.* p. 16; *Minshaw v. Jordan*, *id.* p. 17; *Lisle v. Liddle*, 3 Anst. 649; *Peirson v. Elliot*, 6 Peters, 95, 98, in which last case the doctrine was much considered. [See *Sismay v. Eli*, 13 Jurist, 480.]

person.¹ If it is a deed purporting to convey lands or other hereditaments, its existence in an uncancelled state necessarily has a tendency to throw a cloud over the title.² If it is a mere written agreement, solemn or otherwise, still, while it exists, it is always liable to be applied to improper purposes; and it may be vexatiously litigated at a distance of time, when the proper evidence to repel the claim may have been lost, or obscured; or when the other party may be disabled from contesting its validity with as much ability and force as he can contest it at the present moment.³

§ 700 *a.* But where the illegality of the agreement, deed, or other instrument appears upon the face of it, so that its nullity can admit of no doubt, the same reason for the interference of courts of equity, to direct it to be cancelled or delivered up would not seem to apply; for, in such a case, there can be no danger that the lapse of time may deprive the party of his full means of defence; nor can it, in a just sense, be said, that such a paper can throw a cloud over his right or title, or diminish its security; nor is it capable of being used as a means of vexatious litigation, or serious injury. And, accordingly, it is now fully established, that, in such cases, courts of equity will not interpose their authority to order a cancellation or delivery up of such instruments.⁴ Upon an analogous principle, courts of equity have refused to entertain a bill for the delivery up of a bill of exchange, on which the holder had obtained a judgment at law against the plaintiff, which was satisfied, but where he retained the bill, treating it as a case, in which there

¹ *Minshaw v. Jordan*, 1 Bro. Ch. 17, Mr. Belt's note; *Bromley v. Holland*, 7 Ves. 20, 21; *s. c.* *Cooper*, 9, 21; *Jervis v. White*, 7 Ves. 414; *Bishop of Winchester v. Fournier*, 2 Ves. 445, 446; *Wynne v. Callander*, 1 Russell, 293; *Reed v. Bank of Newburgh*, 1 Paige, 215.

² *Pierce v. Webb*, 3 Bro. Ch. 16, note, and Mr. Belt's notes; *Hayward v. Dimsdale*, 17 Ves. 111; *Byne v. Vivian*, 5 Ves. 606, 607; *Mayor of Colchester v. Lowton*, 1 Ves. & B. 244; *Attorney General v. Morgan*, 2 Russell, 306; *Duncan v. Worrall*, 10 Price, 31; *Jackman v. Mitchell*, 13 Ves. 581; *Petit v. Shephard*, 5 Paige, 493; *Van Doren v. Mayor, &c. of New York*, 9 Paige, 388.

³ *Bromley v. Holland*, 7 Ves. 20, 21; *Kemp v. Pryor*, 7 Ves. 248, 249; *St. John v. St. John*, 11 Ves. 535; *Peake v. Highfield*, 1 Russ. 559; *Duncan v. Worrall*, 10 Price, 31; *Hamilton v. Cummings*, 1 Johns. Ch. 520 to 524. See *Thigpen v. Pitt*, 1 Jones, Eq. 66; *Frakes v. Brown*, 2 Blackf. 295.

⁴ *Gray v. Mathias*, 5 Ves. 286; *Simpson v. Lord Howden*, 3 Mylne & Craig, 97, 102, 103, 108; *Bromley v. Holland*, 7 Ves. 16, 20, 22. See also *Peirsoll v. Elliot*, 6 Peters, 95, 98, 99, 100; *Van Doren v. Mayor, &c. of New York*, 9 Paige, 388; *Smyth v. Griffin*, 13 Simons, 245; *Cox v. Clift*, 2 Comst. 123.

was scarcely a pretence of danger from future litigation ;¹ for the bill was merged in the judgment.

§ 701. The whole doctrine of courts of equity on this subject is referable to the general jurisdiction, which it exercises in favor of a party, *quia timet*.² It is not confined to cases, where the instrument, having been executed, is void upon grounds of law or equity.³ But it is applied, even in cases of forged instruments, which may be decreed to be given up without any prior trial at law on the point of forgery.⁴

§ 702. In cases where the delivery up or cancellation of any deed or other instrument is sought, on account of its being void, the old course used to be, if the validity of the instrument was contested, to direct an issue or a trial at law to ascertain the fact.⁵ But this, although the common practice, was a matter in the sound discretion of the court ; as the determination of a jury upon the point was not indispensable. It was merely ancillary to the conscience of the court of equity, when administering relief, and not strictly the right of the party.⁶ At present, a different and more convenient course seems to prevail (which is clearly within the jurisdiction of the court) ; and that is, for the court itself to decide the point, without sending the matter to be ascertained at law by a jury ; unless it is satisfied, from the contradictory character of the evidence, or the want of clearness in the proofs, that such a determination by a jury would be advisable.⁷

§ 703. Hitherto we have been considering the jurisdiction of courts of equity to decree a delivery up or cancellation of deeds or other instruments, on account of some inherent defect in their original character which renders them either voidable or void.

¹ *Threlfall v. Lunt*, 7 Sim. 627. See *Lisle v. Liddle*, 3 Anst. 649, where, after a verdict and before judgment in favor of the original defendant, the plaintiff in equity was held entitled to a delivery up of the note. See also *Ryan v. Mackmath*, 3 Bro. Ch. 15, 16, 17, and Mr. Belt's notes, id. ; *ante*, § 700, and note (4).

² See *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 34, p. 493 ; *Viner, Abridg. Quia Timet*, A. B. ; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 1, § 8, and note (y) ; *ante*, § 694 ; *post*, § 825 to 851. See *Myers v. Hewitt*, 16 Ohio, 449.

³ See *Thornton v. Knight*, 16 Sim. 509, that a policy of insurance would not be delivered up merely on the ground of a direction.

⁴ *Peake v. Highfield*, 1 Russell, 559.

⁵ See *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3*, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 2, p. 469.

⁶ *Jervis v. White*, 7 Ves. 414.

⁷ *Ibid.* ; *Newman v. Milner*, 2 Ves. Jr. 483 ; *Smith v. Carll*, 5 Johns. Ch. 118, 119 ; *Shepley v. Rangely, Daveis*, 246.

But the powers of courts of equity are by no means limited to cases of this sort. On the contrary, its remediable justice is often and most beneficially applied, by affording specific relief, in cases of unexceptionable deeds and other instruments, in favor of persons who are legally entitled to them.¹ This, indeed, is a very old head of equity jurisdiction, and has been traced back to so early a period as the reign of Edward IV.² It is a most important branch of equity jurisprudence; and is exerted, in all suitable cases of a public or private nature, in favor of persons entitled to the custody and possession of deeds and other writings. But where the title to the possession of deeds and other writings depends upon the validity of the title of the party to the property, to which they relate; and he is not in possession of that property; and the evidence of his title to it is in his own power; or it does not depend upon the production of the deed or writings, of which he prays the delivery; in such cases he must first establish his title to the property at law, before he can come into a court of equity for a delivery of the deeds.³ But, if his title is not disputed, relief follows of course. Thus, heirs-at-laws, devisees, and other persons, properly entitled to the custody and possession of the title-deeds of their respective estates, may, if they are wrongfully detained or withheld from them, obtain a decree for a specific delivery of them.⁴ The same doctrine applies to other instruments and securities, such as bonds, negotiable instruments, and other evidences of property, which are improperly withheld from the persons, who have an equitable or legal interest in them;⁵ or who have a right to have them preserved. This redress a court of common law is,

¹ Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 117, 118; *Brown v. Brown*, 1 Dick. 62; *post*, § 906. [It has been expressly decided, that there is nothing in the nature of the certificate of registry of a ship which excludes it from the jurisdiction of the court to decree its delivery as against a party unlawfully detaining it. *Gilson v. Ingo*, 6 Hare, 112.]

² Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 117, note (I); *Armitage v. Wadsworth*, 1 Mad. 192.

³ Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 54, 117, 118, 128; *Armitage v. Wadsworth*, 1 Mad. 192; *post*, § 906.

⁴ *Reeves v. Reeves*, 9 Mod. 128; *Tanner v. Wise*, 3 P. Will. 296; *Harrison v. Southcote*, 1 Atk. 539; *Ford v. Peering*, 1 Ves. Jr. 92; *Papillon v. Voice*, 2 P. Will. 478; *Duncombe v. Mayer*, 8 Ves. 320; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3*, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 2, p. 468, 469.

⁵ See *Kaye v. Moore*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 61; *Freeman v. Fairlie*, 3 Meriv. 30; *post*, § 906.

for the most part, incapable of affording, since the prescribed forms of its remedies rarely enable it to pronounce a judgment *in rem*, in such cases, which is, or can be made, effectual.¹ It is true, that an action of detinue, or even of replevin, might in some few cases lie, and give the proper remedy, if the thing could be found. But, generally, in actions at law, damages only are recoverable; and such a remedy must, in many cases, be wholly inadequate. This constitutes the true ground for the prompt interposition of courts of equity for the recovery of the specific deeds or other instruments.²

§ 704. Upon similar principles, persons having rights and interests in real estate are entitled to come into equity for the purpose of having an inspection and copies of the deeds under which they claim title.³ And in like manner, remainder-men, and reversioners, and other persons, having limited or ulterior interests in real [or personal⁴] estate, have a right in many cases to come into equity, to have the title-deeds secured for their benefit⁵ [or their interests otherwise secured]. But in all such cases, the court will exercise a sound discretion as to making the decree; for it is by no means an absolute right of the party to have the title-deeds in all cases secured, or brought into chancery for preservation. If such a practice were suffered universally to prevail, the title-deeds of half the estates in the country might be brought into court. To entitle the party, therefore, to seek relief, it must clearly appear that there is danger of a loss or destruction of the title-deeds in the custody of the persons possessing them; and, also, that the interest of the plaintiff is not too contingent, or too remote, to warrant the proceeding.⁶

¹ Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 127, 128; Cooper, Eq. Pl. 197; Jackson v. Butler, 2 Atk. 306; s. c. 9 Mod. 297; Gray v. Cockeril, 2 Atk. 114; Duchess of Newcastle v. Pelham, 3 Bro. Parl. Cas. 460, by Tomlins; s. c. 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. 392, folio edition. ² Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 127, 128.

³ Banbury v. Briscoe, 2 Ch. Cas. 42; 2 Eq. Abridg. 285, D.; Reeves v. Reeves 9 Mod. 128.

⁴ As in slaves. McDougal v. Armstrong, 6 Humph. 428; Bowling v. Bowling, 6 Monroe, 31; Nations v. Hawkins, 11 Ala. 859; James v. Scott, 9 Ala. 579.

⁵ Smith v. Cooke, 3 Atk. 382; Banbury v. Briscoe, 2 Ch. Cas. 42; Ivie v. Ivie, 1 Atk. 431; Lempster v. Pomfret, Ambler, 154; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 2, p. 469; Freeman v. Fairlie, 3 Meriv. 30.

⁶ Ivie v. Ivie, 1 Atk. 431; Ford v. Peering, 1 Ves. Jr. 78, 78; Noel v. Ward, 1 Mad. 322; Lempster v. Pomfret, Ambler, 154; Pyncent v. Pyncent, 3 Atk.

§ 705. Cases also may occur, where a deed, or other instrument, originally valid, has, by subsequent events, such as by a satisfaction, or payment, or other extinguishment of it, legal or equitable, become *functus officio*; and yet, its existence may be either a cloud upon the title of the other party, or subject him to the danger of some future litigation, when the facts are no longer capable of complete proof, or have become involved in the obscurities of time.¹ Under such circumstances, although the deed or other instrument has become a nullity, yet courts of equity will interpose upon the like principles, to prevent injustice, and will decree a delivery and cancellation of the instrument. This, indeed, is a very old head of equity; and traces of it are to be found in some of our earliest reports.²

[* § 705 *a*. And a court of equity will also compel the surrender of a mortgage deed to the mortgagee, where it had been executed and delivered, but not acknowledged, and intrusted to the mortgagor to put upon record, he retaining it in his possession and refusing to surrender it or have it recorded.³]

§ 705 *b*. The doctrine has been applied, not only to cases where the deed or other instrument is clearly established by the proofs to have become *functus officio*, according to the original intent and understanding of both parties, but also to cases where it has been fairly inferable from the acts or conduct of the party entitled to the benefit of the deed or other instrument, that he has treated it as released, or otherwise dead in point of effect. Thus, for example, where a nephew gave a note to his uncle for a sum of money, and afterwards the uncle wrote the following entry, "H. J. P. (the nephew) pays no interest, nor shall I ever take the principal unless greatly distressed," and upon his death, the executors found the entry: it was held a good discharge of the note at law.⁴ So, where a son-in-law was indebted to his father-in-law on several bonds, and by his will the latter left him a legacy, and from some memoran-

571; *Joy v. Joy*, 2 Eq. Abridg. 284; *Webb v. Lymington*, 1 Eden, 8, and the editor's note (*a*); *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 3.

¹ See *Anon.*, *Gilb. Eq.* 1; *Flower v. Marten*, 2 *Myline & Craig*, 459. See *Banks v. Evans*, 10 S. & M. 35.

² *Cary*, 17; *ante*, § 700, 700 *a*.

³ [* *Pierce v. Lamson*, 5 *Allen*, 60.]

⁴ *Aston v. Pye*, 5 *Ves.* 350, note (*b*). Cited also in *Flower v. Marten*, 2 *Myline & Craig*, 474, 475.

dums of the testator it was satisfactorily shown, that the testator did not intend that these bonds should be enforced by the executors ; it was decreed that they should not be the subject of any demand by the executors against the son-in-law.¹ So, where a father, upon payment of the debts of his son, took a bond from the latter, and it was apparent from all the circumstances, that the father did not intend it as an absolute security against his son, but in some sort as a check upon his future conduct, and that he did not intend, after his death, that it should be treated as a debt due from his son to his estate, or to be put in force against him, it was decreed that the bond should be delivered up by the executors to be cancelled.² So, where a testatrix, by her will, forgave a debt due to her on bond by her son-in-law, and he died in her lifetime ; it was held, that it was a release in equity, and that the bond ought to be delivered up by her executor.³

§ 706. There is also a curious case of an analogous nature, which was finally decided by the House of Lords, in which the powers of a court of equity were applied to give relief to an extent which no court of law would for a moment entertain. The testator, on his death-bed, said to his executrix, that he had the bond of B., but when he died B. should have it, and that he should not be asked or troubled for it. The executrix, after the death of the testator, put the bond in suit ; and thereupon, B. brought a bill for a discovery, and delivery up, and cancellation of the bond. And it was decreed accordingly at the hearing by the Lord Chancellor, and his decree was affirmed by the House of Lords.⁴ This case carries the doctrine of an implied trust or equitable extinguishment of a debt to the very verge of the law. The case would be clearly unsupportable, as a *donatio mortis causæ* ; and it must stand

¹ *Eden v. Smith*, 5 Ves. 340, 351. Cited also in *Flower v. Marten*, 2 Mylne & Craig, 474, 475.

² *Flower v. Marten*, 2 Mylne & Craig, 459, 474, 475.

³ *Sipthorp v. Moxon*, 3 Atk. 579 ; *Elliot v. Davenport*, 2 Vern. 521 ; s. c. 1 P. Will. 83. See also *Toplis v. Baker*, cited in Mr. Cox's note, 1 P. Will. 86 ; *Duffield v. Elwes*, 1 Bligh (n. s.), 529, 530, 531, 538, 539 ; *ante*, § 433, note (1), § 607 ; *post*, § 793 a ; *Richards v. Symes*, 2 Eq. Abridg. 617 ; s. c. 2 Atk. 319 2 Barnard 90 ; 1 Bligh (n. s.), 537, 538, 539.

⁴ *Wekett v. Raby*, 3 Bro. Parl. Cas. 16 [2 Bro. Parl. Cas. by Tomlins, 386]. This case was recognized in its principle by Lord Cottenham, in *Flower v. Marten*, 2 Mylne & Craig, 459, 474, 475. See also *Sipthorp v. Moxon*, 3 Atk. 580, 581. But see *Tuffnell v. Constable*, 8 Sim. 69, 70.

upon the parol evidence to establish an intention to have the bond delivered up, not touched or provided for by the testator's will.¹

§ 706 *a*. Whether all the cases, which have been cited in the last two sections, being cases of imperfect gifts or incomplete acts, sought to be enforced in equity in favor of mere volunteers, are strictly maintainable or not upon the true principles which now regulate the subject, may perhaps, in the present state of the authorities, be thought to admit of some doubt.² Be this as it may, they proceed upon the distinct ground, that the transaction was one exclusively between the creditor and the debtor; and that, taking all the circumstances together, it was clearly the intention of the creditor to treat the debt as an equity forgiven and released to the debtor himself. But cases of this sort are clearly distinguishable from purely voluntary imperfect gifts, or assignments of debts or other property to third persons, and also from purely voluntary contracts *inter vivos*, to which, however, at first view, they might seem to bear a very close analogy.³ In respect to voluntary contracts *inter vivos*, it is a general principle, that courts of equity will not interfere; but will leave the parties where the law finds them.⁴ In respect also to gifts and assignments *inter vivos*, courts of equity will enforce them only when the gift or assignment is perfected and complete, so that nothing further re-

¹ It may not, perhaps, be thought very easy, to reconcile the case of *Tuffnell v. Constable* (8 Simmons, 69), with that of *Flower v. Marten* (2 Mylne & Craig, 459, 474, 475). The true difference, however, seems to be, that in the latter case, taking all the circumstances together, the court presumed that the money advanced to the son was originally intended as a gift, or that the father subsequently treated it as a gift, and abandoned it as a debt. In the former case, the assignment of the bond was purely voluntary, and it would not take effect as an assignment, not being under seal, and the act, therefore, imperfect. It is not, perhaps so easy to reconcile *Tuffnell v. Constable* with *Eden v. Smith*, 5 Ves. 541. It has been already stated (*ante*, note (4) to this section) that *Wekett v. Raby* (2 Bro. Parl. Cas. by Tomlins, p. 386) was fully recognized in its principles in *Flower v. Marten*. See *ante*, § 433, note (1), where several of the cases on this subject, are cited; and § 607 *b*, where the case of *Richard v. Symes*, 2 Eq. Abridg. 617, before Lord Hardwicke, is cited, and on which Lord Eldon commented in *Duffield v. Elwes*, 1 Bligh (N. S.), 537, 538; *Callaghan v. Callaghan*, 8 Clark & Fin. 374, 401.

² See *ante*, § 433, 706 *a*; *Flower v. Marten*, 2 Mylne & Craig, 459; *Edwards v. Jones*, 1 Mylne & Craig, 226; *post*, § 787, 793 *a*.

³ See *ante*, § 433; *post*, § 787, 793 *b*, 973, 987.

⁴ *Post*, § 787, 793, 793 *a*, 987.

mains to consummate the title of the donee. For, if the gift or assignment is imperfect, or any further act remains to be done to complete the title of the donee, courts of equity, treating the donee as a mere volunteer, will not aid him to carry into effect either against the donor or against his legal representatives.¹ But of this we shall have occasion to speak more in another place.²

[* § 706 b. There is a class of cases, which occupies some space in the English equity reports, which has not attracted much attention in America, and which may be as conveniently noted here as anywhere; viz., the setting aside of voluntary deeds and settlements, either at the suit of the party to the instrument, or of some other party interested in the subject-matter. Thus it has recently been held, that a mere voluntary deed of gift, the nature of which was not fully understood by the donor, may be set aside, after his death, either at the suit of the heir-at-law of the donor, or of persons claiming under a will of the donor.³ So a voluntary settlement, which was executed by a settlor when he was supposed to be *in extremis*, and which contained no power of revocation, as it was said it should have done, was set aside, on that ground mainly.⁴ But it has generally been required, that, in order to induce a court of equity to set aside a voluntary deed, and especially where it is of the nature of a family arrangement or settlement, that it should be shown that the writing was not fully explained to the maker, or for some reason not entirely well understood by him.⁵

¹ See *ante*, § 433, note (1), where several of the cases are collected. See also *Pulvertoft v. Pulvertoft*, 18 Ves. 91, 93, 99; *Colman v. Sarrel*, 1 Ves. Jr. 52, 54; *Ellison v. Ellison*, 6 Ves. 656; *Antrobus v. Smith*, 12 Ves. 39; *Minturn v. Seymour*, 4 Johns. Ch. 498, 500; *Duffield v. Elwes*, 1 Bligh (N. S.), 529, 530, 531; s. c. 1 Sim. & Stu. 244, 245; *Edwards v. Jones*, 7 Simons, 325; s. c. 1 Mylne & Craig, 226, 227; *Fortescue v. Barnett*, 1 Mylne & Keen, 36; *Sloane v. Cadogan*, Sugden on Vendors, Appx. No. 26 (9th edit.); *Jefferys v. Jefferys*, 1 Craig & Phillips, 132, 140; *Holloway v. Headington*, 8 Simons, 324; *ante*, § 433, note (1); *Duffield v. Elwes*, 1 Bligh (N. S.), 529, 530, 531; *post*, § 787, 793 a, 973; *Cunningham v. Plunkett*, 2 Younge & Coll. 245; 1 Drury & Warren, 308; *Ward v. Audland*, 8 Beavan, 201.

² *Post*, § 787, 793 a, 973, 987, 1040 (c).

³ [* *Anderson v. Elsworth*, 3 Gif. 154; s. c. 7 Jur. N. S. 1047.

⁴ *Forshaw v. Welsby*, 4 Law. T. N. S. 170; s. c. 30 Beav. 243.

⁵ *Toker v. Toker*, 31 Beav. 629; *Phillipson v. Kerry*, 11 W. R. 1034; s. c. 32 Beav. 628. See also *Bonfield v. Hassell*, 32 Beav. 217; *Bentley v. Mackay*, 31 Beav. 143; *May v. May*, 33 Beav. 81.

§ 706 *c.* Where parties in controversy as to their rights, being fully informed as to the facts, and on an equality as to professional advice, come to a deliberate agreement, without fraud, misrepresentation, or surprise, the court will uphold that agreement, although the conclusion at which the parties arrived may differ from that which the court would have reached.¹ The fact that by their agreement the parties have avoided the necessity of legal proceedings, is a sufficient consideration to support the agreement.² Where a settlement for life was made upon the settlor, remainder upon her nephew in fee, and the only consideration expressed in the deed was natural love and affection and a covenant on the part of the nephew to pay off the mortgage upon the premises when called upon, and to indemnify the settlor against the same, and against all proceedings and costs in relation thereto, it was held on a bill for specific performance of a contract of sale subsequently made by the settlor (meaning the decree of the Master of the Rolls), that the covenant to pay the mortgage constituted a valuable consideration for the settlement, and took the case out of the operation of the statute of Elizabeth, and that evidence beyond what appeared on the face of the deed is receivable in such cases to show valuable consideration. It was also considered here that the volunteer was properly a party to the bill for specific performance of a subsequent contract, and if the contract had been decreed to be specifically performed as against the volunteer, it is suggested that the purchase-money ought not to be held upon the same trusts as the land.³]

§ 707. In all these cases, where a delivery up or cancellation of deeds or other instruments is sought, either upon the ground of their original invalidity, or of their subsequent satisfaction, or because the party has a just title thereto, or derives an interest under them, courts of equity act upon an enlarged and comprehensive policy;⁴ and, therefore, in granting the relief, they will impose such terms and qualifications, as shall meet the just equities of the opposing party. Thus, for instance, if the heir-at-law seeks a discovery and delivery of the title-deeds of the estate of his ancestor against a jointress, he will not be allowed

¹ Partridge *v.* Smith, 9 Jur. N. S. 742.

² *Ibid.*

³ Townend *v.* Toker, 12 Jur. N. S. 477.]

⁴ Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 8, and note (*y*).

the relief, unless upon the terms of confirming her jointure.¹ So, where there is a subsequent mortgagee, without notice, who has possession of the title-deeds, he will not be compelled to deliver up the deeds to the first mortgagee, unless upon the terms, that the latter will pay him his mortgage money.² [So, where a party, seeking to set aside a conveyance made by him, has received part of the consideration, he must return it, before a court of equity will cancel the conveyance.³] Cases of this sort afford a very frequent illustration of the maxim, that he who seeks the aid of equity must do equity.

§ 708. There yet remains another class of cases, in which the remedial powers of courts of equity is applied to compel a specific delivery of the thing, to which another person has a clear right. We here allude to the jurisdiction to entertain bills for the delivery of specific chattels. Ordinarily, in cases of chattels, courts of equity will not interfere to decree a specific delivery, because by a suit at law a full compensation may be obtained in damages, although the thing itself cannot be specifically obtained; and, where such a remedy at law is perfectly adequate and effectual to redress the injury, there is no reason why courts of equity should afford any aid to the party.⁴ Indeed, it may be truly said, that the value of goods and merchandise varies so much at different times, that it might not unfrequently be inequitable to decree a specific performance of contracts respecting them, since it might be wholly disproportionate to the injury sustained.⁵

§ 709. But there are cases of personal goods and chattels, in which the remedy at law by damages would be utterly inadequate, and leave the injured party in a state of irremediable loss. In all such cases, courts of equity will interfere, and grant full relief, by requiring a specific delivery of the thing which is wrongfully withheld. This may occur, where the thing is of a peculiar value and importance; and the loss of it cannot be fully compensated in damages, when withheld from the owner; and then relief will be

¹ *Towers v. Davys*, 1 Vern. 479; *Petre v. Petre*, 3 Atk. 511; *Ford v. Peering*, 1 Ves. Jr. 76.

² *Head v. Egerton*, 3 P. Will. 280.

³ *Mill v. Cotten*, 5 Georgie, 341.

⁴ *Buxton v. Lister*, 3 Atk. 383; *Mitford*, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 118, 119; 1 *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 184, 295, 320.

⁵ See *Barr v. Lapsley*, 1 *Wheaton*, 151 and 154, note (a); *Buxton v. Lister*, 3 Atk. 383; *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 118, 119.

granted in equity.¹ Thus, where the lord of a manor was entitled to an old altar-piece, made of silver, and remarkable for a Greek inscription and dedication to Hercules, as treasure-trove within his manor, and it had been sold by a wrong-doer, it was decreed to be delivered up to the lord of the manor, as a matter of curious antiquity, which could not be replaced in value, and which might, by being defaced, become greatly depreciated.² So, where an estate was held by the tenure of a horn, and a bill was brought by the owner to have it delivered up to him, it was held maintainable, for it constituted an essential muniment of his title.³ [The same rule has been applied to a "box of jewels,"⁴ to "mortgage-deeds,"⁵ to "slaves,"⁶ to "furniture and household effects,"⁷ to "bank shares."⁸] The same principle applies to any other chattel, whose principal value consists in its antiquity; or its being the production of some distinguished artist; or in its being a family relic, ornament, or heirloom; such, for instance, as ancient gems, medals, and coins; ancient statues and busts; paintings of old and distinguished masters; and even those of a modern date, having a peculiar distinction and value, such as family pictures

¹ Jeremy, Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 2, p. 467; Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 117; Cooper, Eq. Pl. 132; Fells v. Read, 3 Ves. Jr. 70; Walwyn v. Lee, 9 Ves. 33; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 190, 320. [Relief will also be granted where the party in possession of the chattels has acquired such possession through an alleged abuse of power on the part of one standing in a fiduciary relation to the plaintiff. Wood v. Rowcliffe, 2 Phillips, Ch. 382; s. c. 3 Hare, 304.]

² Somerset v. Cookson, 3 P. Will. 390.

³ Pusey v. Pusey, 1 Vern. 273.

⁴ Saville v. Tankred, 1 Ves. 101; Belt's Supp. 70.

⁵ Jackson v. Butler, 2 Atk. 306; Knye v. Moore, 1 Sim. & Stu. 61.

⁶ [Murphy v. Clark, 1 Sm. & Mar. 221; Butler v. Hicks, 11 Sm. & Mar. 79; Hall v. Clark, 12 S. & M. 189; Dudley v. Mallery, 4 Georgia, 52; Williams v. Howard, 3 Murph. 74; Loftin v. Espy, 4 Yerg. 84; 10 Yerg. 30; Sarter v. Gordon, 2 Hills, Ch. 121; Sims v. Shelton, 2 Strobb. Eq. 221; Young v. Burton, 1 McMullan's Eq. 256; Fraser v. McClenachan, 2 Pick. 79; Ellis v. Commander, 1 Strobb. Eq. 188. But this is to be understood only of such cases when the owner would not have sufficient remedy at law. Wood v. Cariusman, 6 Humph. 279; Savery v. Spence, 13 Alabama, 561; Bryan v. Robert, 1 Strobb. Eq. 188; Farley v. Farley, 1 McCord's Ch. 506.]

⁷ Wood v. Rowcliffe, 3 Hare, 304; but this case may have proceeded upon the ground of a fiduciary relation between the parties. And see Lingen v. Simpson, 1 Sim. & Stu. 600.

⁸ Cowles v. Whitman, 10 Conn. 121. But here there was a trust created in reference to the property.

and portraits, and ornaments, and other things of a kindred nature.¹

§ 710. There are other cases, where courts of equity have interfered to decree a specific delivery of chattels under an agreement of sale, or for an exclusive possession and enjoyment for a term of years. But all these cases stand upon very peculiar circumstances, where the nature of the remedy at law is inadequate to complete redress; or where some other ingredients of equity jurisdiction are mixed up in the transaction, such as the necessity of interference to prevent multiplicity of suits, or irreparable mischief.² Thus, for instance, where, on the dissolution of a partnership, an agreement was made, that a particular book used in the trade should be considered the exclusive property of one of the partners, and that a copy of it should be given to the other, a specific performance of the agreement was decreed as to the copy; for it is clear, that at law no adequate redress could be obtained.³ So a decree was made against a lessee of alum works, to prevent a breach of a covenant, to leave a certain amount of stock on the premises at the expiration of the term; there being ground of suspicion that he did not mean to perform the covenant. So a decree was made against a landlord, to restore to a tenant certain farm stock taken by the former in violation of the terms of his contract.⁴ These cases all proceed upon the same principle of *quia timet*, and the danger of irreparable mischief.⁵

[* § 710 a. Nice questions frequently arise in courts of equity, upon applications to enjoin parties from removing alleged fixtures. There are few subjects where the opinions of the courts have varied more widely, or where it is more difficult to lay down any rule, which shall enable us to solve new cases, as they arise. The

¹ *Fells v. Read*, 3 Ves. Jr. 70; *Lloyd v. Loaring*, 6 Ves. 773, 779; *Lowther v. Lowther*, 13 Ves. 95; *Pearne v. Lisle*, Ambl. 77; *Macclesfield v. Davis*, 3 Ves. & B. 16, 17, 18; *Nutbrown v. Thornton*, 10 Ves. 163; *Arundell v. Phipps*, 10 Ves. 140, 148; *post*, § 719 a.

² See *Nutbrown v. Thornton*, 10 Ves. 159, 161, 163; *Buxton v. Lister*, 3 Atk. 383, 384, 385; *Thompson v. Harcourt*, 2 Bro. Parl. 415; *Arundell v. Phipps*, 10 Ves. 139, 148; *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 119, and notes; *Lloyd v. Loaring*, 6 Ves. 773; 1 *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 186 to 190.

³ *Lingan v. Simpson*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 600.

⁴ *Nutbrown v. Thornton*, 10 Ves. 159; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 6, p. 92, 93; *ante*, § 701; *post*, § 825 to 851.

⁵ *Ward v. Buckingham*, cited 10 Ves. 161.

House of Lords had occasion to examine the question very extensively, in the case of *Fisher v. Dixon*,¹ which was a Scotch appeal, and the rule there laid down (1845) still governs the courts in that country. It is there held, that where the absolute owner of land in fee, for the purpose of better using the land, erected upon and affixed to the freehold certain machinery, such as is in use in working coal and iron mines, that it will go to the heir, as part of the real estate; and if the corpus of such machinery belongs to the heir, all that belongs to that machinery, although, more or less, capable of being detached from it, and of being used in such detached state, more or less, must, nevertheless, be considered as belonging to the heir. In a more recent case² (1856), the subject is very thoroughly examined by Vice-Chancellor Wood, in regard to the machinery in use in copper-roller manufacturers' works. The points ruled by the learned judge are, that, even in regard to manufactures, all articles fixed to the freehold, whether by screws, solder, or any other permanent means, or by being let into the soil, partake of the nature of the soil, and will descend to the heir, or pass by conveyance of the land; that the rule of law by which fixtures are held less strictly, when erected for manufacturing purposes, has no application to fixtures erected by the owners of the land in fee; that machinery standing merely by its own weight does not become a fixture. But when part of a machine is a fixture, and another and essential part of it is movable, the latter also shall be considered a fixture.³ It has been held, that under an equitable mortgage by the deposit of a lease, unaccompanied by any memorandum, the tenant's fixtures will be included.⁴

§ 710 *b*. An interesting opinion upon the question of the right of the mortgagor, or his partners in business, to remove trade fixtures from the premises where the business is carried on, the same being under mortgage and the fixtures erected after the mortgage, was delivered by Lord Romilly, M. R.⁵ His lordship, after an

¹ [* 12 Cl. & Fin. 312. See also *Walmesley v. Milne*, 8 Am. Law Reg. 373; (Eng. Com. Pl. Nov. 2, 1859); s. c. 1 L. T. N. s. 62.

² *Mather v. Fraser*, 2 Kay & Johnson, 536.

³ *The Metropolitan Counties' Society v. Brown*, 26 Beavan, 454. This was the case of an anvil, which, though not fixed, was regarded as essential to a fixed steam-hammer.

⁴ *Williams v. Evans*, 23 Beavan, 239.

⁵ *Cullwick v. Swindell*, Law Rep. 3 Eq. 249.

extensive review of the former cases came to the conclusion that the law of England was clearly settled that such fixtures could not be removed by the mortgagor or his partners or tenants, although in the ordinary case of tenants such fixtures are removable. His lordship regarded the case as governed by *Cotton, ex parte.*^{1]}

§ 711. And formerly, where the court would not decree a specific performance and delivery of chattels, it would yet entertain the suit to decree compensation against the party for his omission to perform his contract. Thus, for instance, where there was a contract for the delivery of specific stock, the court refused to decree a specific performance; but, at the same time, entertained the bill for the purpose of giving compensation for the non-delivery.² But this subject will naturally come more properly under review in the succeeding chapter.³

[* § 711 a. It is very common in courts of equity to entertain suits, for the purpose of removing a cloud resting upon the plaintiff's title. This is done upon the ground, that it is for the interest of both parties, that the precise state of the title to the estate be known if all are acting *bond fide*; and if not, that a merely colorable and pretended claim is a fraud upon the real owner, and as such should be extinguished. Such bills are brought by the party in possession, in order to obtain a perpetual injunction against such false claim, partly for the reason that, being himself in possession, he cannot maintain an action at law to try the question.^{4]}

¹ 2 M. D. & DeG. 725. See also *Bidder v. Trinidad Petroleum Co.*, 17 W. R. 153.]

² *Cud v. Rutter*, 1 P. Will. 570, and *Cox's notes* (2 and 3); *Colt v. Netterville*, 2 P. Will. 394, 395; *post*, § 617, 718, 723, 796.

³ *Post*, § 717, 718, 723, 794 to 799.

⁴ [* *Eldridge v. Smith*, 34 Vt. 484; *Hodges v. Griggs*, 21 Vt. 280.]

CHAPTER XVIII.

SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE OF AGREEMENTS AND OTHER DUTIES.

- [* § 712. Specific performance of agreements.
- § 713. With reference to personalty, personal acts, and realty.
- § 714. Specific performance often due to simple justice.
- § 715. Form of the contract not important.
- § 716. This jurisdiction ancient and highly useful.
- § 717, 717 a. Rests upon the fact that pecuniary compensation is inadequate.
- § 718. In such cases specific performance of sales of chattels decreed.
- § 719-720. Cases illustrating the principle of compensation.
- § 719 a. Courts of equity may decree surrender of artist's own picture.
- § 721. Between landlord and tenant to prevent irreparable mischief.
- § 721 a. Permanent works upon real estate.
- § 722. Other illustrations of the same principle.
- § 722 a. The subject illustrated by contracts of partnership.
- § 723. Right to specific performance mutual.
- § 724, 724 a. Contracts to convey stocks considered.
- § 725-728. Contracts to repair and to rebuild referred to; authority against decreeing specific performance.
- § 729. Other cases illustrating the subject.
- § 730. Preventive interference of courts of equity.
- § 731-735. Will decree specific performance of contract to procure wife's act.
- § 735 a. Also for separation between husband and wife.
- § 736. Will not interfere in favor of party in fault, or in cases of doubt.
- § 736 a, 736 b, 736 c. When a contract becomes complete and binding.
- § 737. Contracts not to obstruct the enjoyment of land not conveyed.
- § 737 a. Mode of decreeing, or resisting, specific performance.
- § 738-741. Consideration of the question whether damages being recoverable at law for the breach of a contract, has any bearing upon the right to decree for specific performance.
- § 742. Relief in all such cases matter of legal discretion.
- § 743. In regard to lands in foreign countries.
- § 744, 744 a. The same principle further illustrated.
- § 745. Extends to contracts within, and not within, the statute of frauds.
- § 746. More seldom decreed, as to personal, than real estate.
- § 747. Grounds for preferring the remedy in equity.
- § 748. Will dispense with mere legal formalities.
- § 749. Will not decree specific performance if vendor's title defective.
- § 749 a. What degree of misrepresentation will bar specific performance.
- § 749 b. Will not decree specific performance against understanding of either party.
- § 749 c. In what cases courts of equity award damages.
- § 750. Or where it would be unequal between the parties.
- § 750 a. Or where the contract is founded in fraud or imposition.
- § 751. The form of the contract is not material.

- § 751 *a.* But the relation of the parties is often taken into account.
- § 752, 753. The statute of frauds and its policy.
- § 754. Equity cannot dispense with the substance of the statute.
- § 755. May decree upon the admission of defendant's answer.
- § 756. Where the answer insists upon the statute as a defence, shall the court decree?
- § 757. It seems settled that it cannot.
- § 758. How far is the defendant bound to discover a paid contract?
- § 759. Part-performance takes a case out of the statute.
- § 760. Part-payment of the price will not have that effect.
- § 761, 763. Taking possession, in faith of the contract, is part-performance.
- § 762. But acts preliminary and not in fulfilment of the contract are not.
- § 763 *a.* If the party retain possession under the contract it is sufficient.
- § 764. Will not decree specific performance of indefinite contract.
- § 765. These exceptions rest upon questionable policy.
- § 766. Lord Redesdale's opinion against extending them.
- § 767. Will not decree specific performance of indefinite written contract.
- § 768. But will so decree where the writing is omitted by fraud.
- § 769. Will not so decree if in any respect inequitable.
- § 769 *a.* Will arrange particulars of contract, with reason and justice.
- § 769 *b.* Where title proves defective the only remedy at law.
- § 770. Defendant may show matter of excuse or defence.
- § 770 *a.* Will not decree specific performance with alterations, unless on the ground of fraud or written admissions.
- § 770 *b.* Where the parties agree, court will decree accordingly.
- § 771. The party seeking such relief must be without fault.
- § 772, 773. No such relief, where plaintiff is *in statu quo*, or unable to fulfil his portion of the contract.
- § 774. But where plaintiff is not *in statu quo*, and not in fault, may have decree.
- § 775. Equity will admit compensation of unimportant particulars.
- § 776. Time not of essence of contracts, but may be made so.
- § 777. Unimportant variations admitted with compensation.
- § 777 *a.* Contract to purchase at vendee's election must be strictly complied with, to admit of specific performance.
- § 778. Specific performance not allowed, where estate or title essentially defective.
- § 778 *a.* Many contracts are of such a nature the courts of equity cannot enforce them specifically.
- § 778 *b.* Numerous grounds on which specific performance denied.
- § 778 *c.* Trade-marks a protection to the public.
- § 778 *d.* May decree specific performance of contracts with railways, but time here of the essence of contract.
- § 778 *e.* Grounds of refusal to decree specific performance of railway covenants.
- § 778 *f.* Awards of same force as to specific performance as agreements. Grounds of refusal to interfere.
- § 779. Purchaser may have part-performance at his election.
- § 780. Courts of equity do not encourage departures from contract.
- § 781. Other parol contracts enforced to prevent fraud.
- § 782. Contracts not within the statute of frauds.
- § 783. The assignee may bring a bill for specific performance.
- § 784. A purchaser with notice liable to such bill.
- § 785. Contracts which will be specifically decreed.
- § 786. Contracts in regard to wills enforced.

§ 787. Equity will only decree performance of valid binding contracts.

§ 788. Privies in estate liable to such decree.

§ 789. Purchasers with notice stand in the place of their vendors.

§ 790, 791. Equity regards the land as the vendee's, and the price as the vendor's.

§ 792. This rule not applied to all cases or all parties.

§ 793. It is modified by the intention of the parties interested.

§ 793 a. But that will not be inferred from slight circumstances.

§ 793 b. Equity will not interfere on behalf of volunteers.

§ 793 c. But the assignment of property in the hands of trustees is good.

§ 793 d. Some cases not strictly within the principle.

§ 793 e. Not important to multiply cases on this subject.

§ 793 f-793 m. Numerous recent cases illustrating the grounds upon which specific performance will be granted or denied.]

§ 712. HAVING thus gone over some of the principal grounds, upon which courts of equity will interpose to decree the rescission, cancellation, or delivery up of agreements, securities, and other instruments, and the delivery of chattels to the rightful owners, we shall in the next place pass to the consideration of the other branch of our inquiries; namely, what are the cases in which courts of equity will interpose and decree a specific performance of agreements?

§ 713. With reference to the present subject, agreements may be divided into three classes: (1) those which respect personal property; (2) those which respect personal acts; and (3) those which respect real property. And we shall presently see, that the jurisdiction now actually exercised by courts of equity is not coextensive in all these classes of cases, but at the same time it may be fairly resolved into the same general principles.

§ 714. It is well known that by the common law every contract or covenant to sell or transfer a thing, if there is no actual transfer, is treated as a mere personal contract or covenant; and, as such, if it is unperformed by the party, no redress can be had, except in damages; this is in effect, in all cases, allowing the party the election either to pay damages, or to perform the contract or covenant at his sole pleasure. But courts of equity have deemed such a course wholly inadequate for the purposes of justice; and considering it a violation of moral and equitable duties they have not hesitated to interpose, and require from the conscience of the offending party a strict performance of what he cannot, without manifest wrong or fraud, refuse.¹ However, where it has become

¹ See 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 286; *Alley v. Deschamps*, 13 Ves. 228, 229; *Gilb. For. Rom.* 220; *Harnett v. Yeilding*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 553.

impossible, from subsequent events, for the party to perform his contract as by a subsequent sale or the subject-matter of the contract without notice, courts of equity will not decree a specific performance; but will, as we shall see, retain the bill for compensation.¹

§ 715. The jurisdiction of courts of equity, to decree a specific performance of contracts, is not dependent upon, or affected by, the form or character of the instrument. What these courts seek to be satisfied of is, that the transaction in substance amounts to, and is intended to be, a binding agreement for a specific object, whatever may be the form or character of the instrument. Thus, if a bond with a penalty is made upon condition to convey certain lands upon the payment of a certain price, it will be deemed in equity an agreement to convey the land at all events and not to be discharged by the payment of the penalty, although it has assumed the form of a condition only.² Courts of equity, in all cases of this sort, look to the substance of the transaction, and the primary object of the parties; and where that requires a specific performance, they will treat the penalty as a mere security for its due performance and attainment.³

§ 716. The jurisdiction of courts of equity to decree a specific performance of agreements, is certainly of a very ancient date, if it be not coeval with the existence of these courts in England. It may be distinctly traced back to the reign of Edward IV.; for, in the Year Book of 8th Edward IV. 4 (b), it was expressly recognized by the Chancellor as a clear jurisdiction.⁴ But, whatever

¹ Greenaway v. Adams, 12 Ves. 395, 400; *post*, § 723, 796.

² Sugden on Vendors, ch. 4, § 2, p. 202 (7th edition); Newland on Contr. ch. 17, p. 307 to 310; Logan v. Wienholt, 7 Bligh, 1, 49, 50; Chilliner v. Chilliner, 2 Ves. 528; Ensign v. Kellogg, 4 Pick. 1; *post*, § 751. [* See Fisher v. Shaw, 42 Maine, 32.]

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 287; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 5, note (c); Newl. on Contr. ch. 6, p. 88; Halsey v. Grant, 13 Ves. 76. The case in 8th Edw. IV. 4 (b), was a suit in chancery; and Genney, of counsel for the defendant, in his argument said by way of illustration (as the text stands): "If I promise to build a house for you, if I do not build it you shall have a remedy by *subpœna*"; to which the Chancellor is reported to have replied, "He shall." I cannot but think that Genney put the case, not as an affirmative proposition, but by way of interrogatory (would he have a *subpœna*?), for so the scope of his argument required. But, either way, the Chancellor's remark points in favor of the jurisdiction. In cases of contract to build a house, or a bridge, a specific performance would not now be decreed. See Errington v. Aynesly, 2 Bro. Ch. 341, 342; Mosely v. Virgin, 3 Ves. Jr. 185, 186; Lucas v. Commerford, 3 Bro. Ch. 166,

may be its origin and antiquity, it is now clearly established, and is in daily and most beneficial exercise for the purposes of justice.¹ The ground of the jurisdiction is, that a court of law is inadequate to decree a specific performance, and can relieve the injured party only by a compensation in damages, which, in many cases, would fall far short of the redress which his situation might require. Wherever, therefore, the party wants the thing *in specie*, and he cannot otherwise be fully compensated, courts of equity will grant him a specific performance.²

§ 717. And this constitutes the true and leading distinction in

167. [Lucas v. Commerford was commented on and disapproved in the late case of Moore v. Greg, 12 Jurist, 952.] ¹ Gilbert, *Lex Prætoria*, 295.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 5, note (o); *Bettesworth v. Dean of St. Paul's*, Sel. Cas. in Ch. 68, 69; *Halsey v. Grant*, 13 Ves. 76; *Flint v. Brandon*, 8 Ves. 159, 163; *Harnett v. Yeilding*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 553; *Errington v. Aynesly*, 2 Bro. Ch. 341; *Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 112, 118, 119; *Gilb. Forum Roman.* 220; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 4, § 4, p. 190, 191 (7th edition); *Gilb. Lex Prætoria*, 235; *Cathcart v. Robinson*, 5 Peters, 264; *Storer v. Great Western Railway Co.*, 2 Y. & Coll. N. R. 48, 50. In *Harnett v. Yeilding*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 552, 553, Lord Redesdale said: "I have bestowed a good deal of consideration upon this case, and particularly with reference to the jurisdiction exercised by courts of equity in decreeing specific performance of agreements. Whether courts of equity, in their determinations on this subject, have always considered what was the original foundation of decrees of this nature, I very much doubt. I believe that from something of habit, decrees of this kind have been carried to an extent which has tended to injustice. Unquestionably, the original foundation of these decrees was simply this, that damages at law would not give the party the compensation to which he was entitled; that is, would not put him in a situation as beneficial to him as if the agreement were specifically performed. On this ground, the court, in a variety of cases, has refused to interfere, where, from the nature of the case the damages must necessarily be commensurate to the injury sustained; as, for instance, in agreements for the purchase of stock, it being the same thing to the party where or from whom the stock is purchased, provided he receives the money that will purchase it. These cases show what were the grounds on which courts of equity first interfered; but they have constantly held that the party who comes into equity for a specific performance must come with perfect propriety of conduct, otherwise they will leave him to his remedy at law. He must also show that in seeking the performance he does not call upon the other party to do an act which he is not lawfully competent to do; for, if he does, a consequence is produced that quite passes by the object of the court in exercising the jurisdiction, which is to do more complete justice. If a party is compelled to do an act which he is not lawfully authorized to do, he is exposed to a new action for damages at the suit of the person injured by such act; and therefore, if a bill is filed for a specific performance of an agreement made by a man who appears to have a bad title, he is not compellable to execute it, unless the party seeking performance is willing to accept such a title as he can give;

the present exercise of equity jurisdiction in England, in regard to decreeing specific performance. It does not proceed (as is sometimes erroneously supposed) upon any distinction between real estate and personal estate; but upon the ground, that damages at law may not, in the particular case, afford a complete remedy.¹ Thus, courts of equity will decree performance of a contract for land, not because of the particular nature of land, but because the damages at law, which must be calculated upon the general value of land, may not be a complete remedy to the purchaser, to whom the land purchased may have a peculiar and special value. So, courts of equity will not generally decree performance of a contract for the sale of stock or goods; not because of their personal nature, but because the damages at law, calculated on the market-price of the stock or goods, are as complete a remedy for the purchaser, as the delivery of the stock or goods contracted for; inasmuch as with the damages he may ordinarily purchase the same quantity of the like stock or goods.²

and that only in cases where an injury would be sustained by the party plaintiff, in case he were not to get such an execution of the agreement as the defendant can give. I take the reason to be this among others, — not only that it is laying the foundation of an action at law, in which damages may be recovered against the party, but also that it is by possibility injuring a third person, by creating a title with which he may have to contend. There is also another ground on which courts of equity refuse to enforce specific execution of agreements; that is, when, from the circumstances, it is doubtful whether the party meant to contract to the extent that he is sought to be charged. All these are held sufficient grounds to induce the court to forbear decreeing specific performance, that being a remedy intended by courts of equity to supply what are supposed to be the defects in the remedy given by the courts of law. Under these circumstances, therefore, I think considerable caution is to be used in decreeing specific performance of agreements; and the court is bound to see that it really does that complete justice which it aims at, and which is the ground of its jurisdiction.”

¹ *Adderley v. Dixon*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 607; *Cud v. Rutter*, 1 P. Will, 570, 571; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 295, 296; *Harnett v. Yielding*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 553, 554; *Dean v. Izard*, and *Hollis v. Edwards*, 1 Vern. 159.

² *Adderley v. Dixon*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 607, and the cases cited in the preceding note; *post*, § 717, 724. Lord Hardwicke, in *Buxton v. Lister* (3 Atk. 384), lays down the same distinction between contracts respecting chattels and contracts respecting lands. But he does not seem to give precisely the same reasons for the distinction. “In general,” says he, “this court will not entertain a bill for a specific performance of contracts of stock, corn, hops, &c.; for, as these are contracts which relate to merchandise that vary according to different times and circumstances, if a court of equity should admit such bills, it might

§ 717 *a.* The truth is, that, upon the principles of natural justice, courts of equity might proceed much farther, and might insist upon decreeing a specific performance of all *bond fide* contracts; since that is a remedy to which courts of law are inadequate.¹ There is no pretence for the complaints, sometimes made by the common lawyers, that such relief in equity would wholly subvert the remedies by actions of the case and actions of covenant; for it is against conscience, that a party should have a right of election, whether he would perform his covenant, or only pay damages for the breach of it. But, on the other hand, there is no reasonable objection to allowing the other party, who is injured by the breach, to have an election, either to take damages at law, or to have a specific performance in equity; the remedies being concurrent, but not coextensive with each other.² The restriction stands, therefore, not so much upon any general principle *ex æquo et bono*, as upon the general convenience of leaving the party to his remedy in damages at law, where that will give him a clear and full compensation. And the true reason why a contract for stock is not now specifically decreed, is, that it is ordinarily capable of such an exact compensation. But cases of a peculiar stock may easily be supposed, where courts of equity might still feel themselves bound to decree a specific performance, upon the ground that, from its nature, it has a peculiar value, and is incapable of compensation by damages.³ Indeed, it has been thought, that on contracts for stock, a bill ought now to be maintainable generally in equity for a specific delivery thereof, upon the ground that a court of law can-

drive on parties to the execution of a contract, to the ruin of one side, when, upon an action, that party might not have paid, perhaps, above a shilling damage." "As to the cases of contracts for purchase of lands or things that relate to realities, those are of a permanent nature; and, if a person agrees to purchase them, it is on a particular liking to the land, and is quite a different thing from matters in the way of trade." It has been very properly remarked by Lord Chief Baron Richards, that the reason given by Lord Hardwicke for not entertaining jurisdiction in cases of chattels would equally apply to contracts for the purchase of land, which (in the present times) sinks and rises in value in an extraordinary manner. *Wright v. Bell*, 5 Price, 329. See also *Doloret v. Rothchild*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 590; [* and *Kekewich v. Manning*, 1 De G., M. & Gordon, 176, in regard to equitable trusts.]

¹ *Halsey v. Grant*, 13 Ves. 76, 77; *Alley v. Deschamps*, 13 Ves. 228.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. Pl. B. 1, ch. 1, § 5, 6, and note (*r*); id. B. 1, ch. 3, § 2, and note (*d*); *Alley v. Deschamps*, 13 Ves. 228; *Gilb. For. Rom.* 220.

³ See *Lady Arundell v. Phipps*, 10 Ves. 148; *post*, § 724; *Forrest v. Elwes*, 4 Ves. 497.

not give the property, but can only give a remedy in damages, the beneficial effect of which must depend upon the personal responsibility of the party.¹

§ 718. But although the general rule now is, not to entertain jurisdiction in equity for a specific performance of agreements respecting goods, chattels, stock, choses in action, and other things of a merely personal nature ;² yet the rule is (as we have seen) a qualified one, and subject to exceptions ; or, rather, the rule is limited to cases where a compensation in damages furnishes a complete and satisfactory remedy.³ Cases may readily be enumerated, which are, and have been deemed, fit for the exercise of equity jurisdiction. Thus, where there was a contract for the sale of 800 tons of iron, to be paid for in a certain number of years, by instalments, a specific performance was decreed ; for such sort of contracts (it was said) differ from those which are to be immediately executed.⁴ But the true reason probably was, that under the particular circumstances of the case, there could be no adequate compensation in damages at law ; for the profits upon the contract, being to depend upon future events, could not be correctly estimated by the jury in damages, inasmuch as the calculation must proceed upon mere conjecture.⁵

§ 719. Lord Hardwicke has himself put several cases to illustrate the same exception. A man may contract for the purchase of a great quantity of timber, as a ship-carpenter, by reason of the vicinity of the timber, and this may be well known and understood on the part of the buyer ; and then a specific performance would seem indispensable to justice.⁶ On the other hand, there may be a peculiar convenience on the part of the seller ; as, if a man wants to clear his land, in order to turn it to a particular sort of husbandry ; there, nothing could answer the justice of the case, but the performance of the contract *in specie*.⁷ Upon the

¹ Doloret v. Rothschild, 1 Sim. & Stu. 500 ; *post*, 724.

² See 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 320 ; Pooley v. Budd, 7 Eng. Law & Eq. 228.

³ See Eden on Injunct. ch. 2, p. 27 ; Wood v. Rowcliffe, 3 Hare, 304 ; Waters v. Howard, 1 Md. Ch. Dec. 112 ; Phillips v. Berger, 2 Barb. 609 ; 8 id. 527.

⁴ Taylor v. Neville, cited in 3 Atk. 384 ; Adderley v. Dixon, 1 Sim. & Stu. 610.

⁵ Adderley v. Dixon, 1 Sim. & Stu. 607, 610.

⁶ Buxton v. Lister, 3 Atk. 384, 385 ; Adderley v. Dixon, 1 Sim. & Stu. 607.

⁷ *Ibid.* So a bill has been maintained for the specific delivery of chattels. The case made by the bill was that certain specific chattels, described in an inventory, had been placed in the possession of A., as agent of the plaintiff, and

same general ground, an agreement for the purchase of timber-trees, to be paid for in six annual instalments, and eight years to be allowed for disposing of the same, and articles of agreement to be drawn up accordingly, has been thought to be a fit case for a decree for a specific performance; especially as, in that case, the agreement, contemplating future articles, might perhaps be deemed incomplete at law.¹ And, indeed, this last ground alone would be sufficient to sustain the jurisdiction; ² and it has been adopted on other occasions.³

[* § 719 *a*. And it has been recently decided, in one of the Vice-Chancellor's courts, that specific performance of a contract for the sale of a chattel will be decreed where pecuniary damages would not be an adequate compensation, as where the article is of unusual distinction and curiosity, and of doubtful value.⁴

§ 719 *b*. And in another more recent case⁵ it was said the courts of equity have jurisdiction to order the delivery up to an artist of a picture painted by himself, as having a special value, and the legal remedy being inadequate. But where by the terms of an agreement, and the frame of the pleading, an artist, seeking such restitution, had, in effect, put a fixed price upon the picture, the court considered that the recovery of damages would be an adequate remedy, and that there was no jurisdiction in a court of equity to interfere.]

§ 720. Other illustrations may be found in cases, not merely of sales, but of matters peculiarly resting in contracts of a very different nature. Thus, where a covenant was made, in a lease of some alum works, to leave a certain stock upon the premises, a

that A. had, in breach of the duty of an agent, contracted to sell them to a third party. The court restrained the agent from parting with the possession. *Wood v. Rowcliffe*, 3 Hare, 304.

¹ *Buxton v. Lister*, 3 Atk. 382, 385.

² See *Doloret v. Rothschild*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 590.

³ *Wright v. Bell*, 5 Price, 325, 332.

⁴ [* *Falcke v. Gray*, 5 Jur. n. s. 645. Perhaps it will enable us to appreciate the basis of this decision more fully, to bear in mind that the articles sold were two ancient China jars, which were so nearly unique that it was impossible to say what price they would bear in the market. And this, says Vice-Chancellor Kindersley, is the true ground of distinction in regard to granting or denying specific performance of contracts, whether with reference to real or personal estate. See the language of Lord Redesdale, in *Harnett v. Yeilding*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 548, 553; *ante*, § 716; *post*, § 723.

⁵ *Dowling v. Betjemann*, 2 Johns. & H. 544; s. c. 8 Jur. n. s. 538.]

specific performance was decreed; because the trade would be greatly damaged if the covenant was not specifically performed, contrary to the real justice of the case between the parties; and the landlord had stipulated for a sort of enjoyment of the premises after the expiration of the lease.¹ [So, where A. agreed with B. to furnish a quantity of fruit-trees, and B. agreed to plant and cultivate them on his own farm and sell the fruit on joint account during the life of the trees; but before that time B. died, and his administrator sold his right to C., C. was allowed to file a bill for a specific performance, and for an account and payment of half the net proceeds of the sale.² So where a person pledged his growing crops to his agent who was to advance money and accept drafts drawn thereon, and the person died insolvent, and largely indebted to his agent, the latter obtained a judgment for a specific performance of the contract, and the crops were ordered to be forwarded to him.³]

§ 721. Of the like nature are the common cases of covenants between landlords and tenants, where injunctions, in the nature of a specific performance, are often decreed; as, for instance, covenants not to remove manure or crops at the end of a lease [covenants to use the demised premises only for a certain business⁴]; covenants not to plough meadow; covenants not to dig gravel, sand, or coal. In all cases of this sort, although the court acts merely by injunction, to prevent the breach of the particular covenant, it in effect secures thereby a specific performance; and it may at once be seen, that such interposition is indispensable to prevent irreparable mischief.⁵

§ 721 a. Indeed, it may be laid down as a general rule, that it is competent for the court to interfere to enforce the specific performance of a contract by the defendant to do definite work upon his property, in the performance of which the plaintiff has a material interest, and one which is not capable of an adequate compensation in damages. A recent case furnishes a very satis-

¹ *Ward v. Duke of Buckingham*, cited 3 Atk. 385; s. c. 10 Ves. 161.

² *McKnight v. Robbins*, 1 Halstead, Ch. 229, 642.

³ *Sullivan v. Tuck*, 1 Md. Ch. Dec. 59.

⁴ *Steward v. Winter*, 4 Sandf. Ch. 587.

⁵ See *Eden on Injunct.* ch. 2, p. 27; *id.* ch. 10, p. 198, 199, and cases there cited; *Bathurst v. Burden*, 2 Bro. Ch. 64; *City of London v. Pugh*, 3 Bro. Parl. Cas. 374; s. c. 4 Bro. Parl. Cas. 395, by Tomlins; *post*, § 929, 958.

factory illustration of this doctrine; where a railway company undertook to build and maintain an archway on the pleasure-grounds of the plaintiff through which the railway was to pass, upon his withdrawing all opposition, and to make it sufficient to permit a loaded carriage to pass under. A specific performance was decreed.¹

§ 722. Cases of agreements to form a partnership, and to execute articles accordingly, may also be specifically decreed, although they relate exclusively to chattel interests; for no adequate compensation can, in such cases, be made at law.² Upon the like ground, courts of equity will decree the specific performance of a covenant for a lease, or to renew a lease³ [so, of a contract to insure against loss by fire⁴]; so, of a contract for the sale of the good-will of a trade, and of a valuable secret connected with it;⁵ or for a barge, stores, &c.⁶ [so, of a contract to assign an agreement between the defendant and a stranger, for service to be performed by plaintiff, on a stipulated compensation⁷]; so of a contract to keep the banks of a river in repair;⁸ so, of a contract to pay the plaintiff an annual sum for life, and a certain other sum for every hundred weight of brass wire manufactured by the defendant during the life of the plaintiff;⁹ so, of a contract for the

¹ *Storer v. The Great Western Railroad Co.*, 2 Y. & Coll. New R. 48, 53.

² *Buxton v. Lister*, 3 Atk. 385; *Anon.*, 2 Ves. 629; *Birchett v. Bolling*, 5 Munf. 442; *Story on Partnership*, § 188, 189; *England v. Curling*, 3 Beavan, 129; *ante*, § 666-668 *a*.

³ *Furnival v. Carew*, 3 Atk. 83, 87; *Tritton v. Foote*, 2 Bro. Ch. 636; *s. c.* 2 Cox, 174; *Russell v. Darwin*, cited in note, 2 Bro. Ch. 639; *Burke v. Smyth*, 3 J. & L. 193; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 6, p. 95 to 103; 5 Vin. Abridg. 548, pl. 4. [But a covenant between landlord and tenant to extend a lease which does not fix the amount of rent, cannot be enforced in equity. *Robinson v. Kettletas*, 4 Edw. Ch. 67; *Whitlock v. Duffield*, 1 Hoff. Ch. 100. A covenant to renew a lease, simply, at a certain rent, does not carry any of the covenants of the old lease with it. *Willis v. Astor*, 4 Edw. Ch. 594.]

⁴ *Taylor v. Merchants' Fire Ins. Co.*, 9 How. U. S. 390; *Neville v. Merchants', &c. Ins. Co.*, 19 Ohio, 452; *Carpenter v. Mutual Safety Ins. Co.*, 4 Sandf. Ch. 408.

⁵ *Bryson v. Whitehead*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 74. But see *Baxter v. Conolly*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 576; *Coslake v. Till*, 1 Russell, 378.

⁶ *Claringbould v. Curtis*, 11 Eng. Law & Eq. 197.

⁷ *Woodward v. Aspinwall*, 3 Sandf. S. C. 272.

⁸ *Kilmorey v. Thackeray*, cited 2 Bro. Ch. 65; *id.* 343.

⁹ *Ball v. Coggs*, 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. 140 [296], cited 1 Sim. & Stu. 607.

sale of an annuity payable out of the dividends of stock;¹ so, of a covenant upon the grant of an annuity to charge the same upon all the property of which the grantor should be possessed at the death of the annuitant, if the grantor should survive him² [so, of a contract to discharge a judgment debt upon receipt of a third person's promissory note for a portion of the amount³]; so, of a contract for the sale of debts proved under a commission of bankruptcy, where an assignment of the debt had not been already executed.⁴

§ 722 a. In like manner, although where one partner contracts, that he will exert himself for the benefit of the partnership, a court of equity cannot compel the specific performance of that part of the agreement; yet, if he has also covenanted that he will not carry on the same trade with other persons, there being a partnership subsisting, the court will restrain him from breaking that part of the agreement.⁵ So, if a party covenants, that he will not carry on his trade within a certain distance or in a certain place, within which the other party carries on the same trade, a court of equity will restrain the party from breaking the agreement so made. In each of these cases, the decree operates, *pro tanto*, as a specific performance.⁶ The ground of all these decisions is the utter uncertainty of any calculation of damages, as they must in such cases be in a great measure conjectural; or that some further act is necessary to be done to clothe the defendant with a full and effective title to support his claim.⁷

§ 723. Where the specific performance of a contract respecting chattels will be decreed upon the application of one party, courts of equity will maintain the like suit at the instance of the other party, although the relief sought by him is merely in the nature of a compensation in damages or value; for, in all such cases, the court acts upon the ground that the remedy, if it exists at all, ought to be

¹ *Withy v. Cottle*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 174. See also *Pritchard v. Ovey*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 396.

² *Lyde v. Mynn*, 1 Mylne & Keen, 683.

³ *Phillips v. Berger*, 2 Barb. 609; 8 id. 527.

⁴ *Adderley v. Dixon*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 607; *Wright v. Bell*, 5 Price, 325.

⁵ *Kemble v. Kean*, 6 Simons, 333. See *Lumley v. Wagner*, 16 Jurist, 871; 12 Eng. Law & Eq.; *Stocker v. Brocklebank*, 5 Eng. Law & Eq. 67.

⁶ *Kemble v. Kean*, 6 Simons, 333. See *Lumley v. Wagner*, 16 Jurist, 871; 12 Eng. Law & Eq.; *Stocker v. Brocklebank*, 5 Eng. Law & Eq. 67.

⁷ *Adderley v. Dixon*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 607; *post*, § 729, 785.

mutual and reciprocal, as well for the vendor as for the purchaser.¹

§ 724. Indeed, a disposition has been evinced, on various occasions, to apply the jurisdiction to a much larger extent.² Thus, although the doctrine seems well settled, that a contract for the sale of stock will not now be decided to be specifically performed, because it is ordinarily capable of an exact compensation in damages;³ yet it is well known, that, as late as Lord Hardwicke's time, such contracts were so decreed in chancery.⁴ And, even in our own times, it has been held, that a bill will lie for a specific performance of a contract for the purchase of government stock in favor of a holder of scrip receipts, purporting to give the title to the bearer thereof, where the bill prayed for the delivery of

¹ *Withy v. Cottle*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 174; *Adderley v. Dixon*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 607; *Forrest v. Elwes*, 4 Ves. 497; *Lewis v. Lechmere*, 10 Mod. 506; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 6, p. 91; *Brown v. Haff*, 5 Paige, 295; *Cathcart v. Robinson*, 5 Peters, 264; *ante*, § 711; *post*, § 790, 796; *Phillips v. Berger*, 8 Barbour, 528; *Hamblin v. Dinneford*, 2 Edw. Ch. 531; *Flight v. Bolland*, 4 Russ. 298; *ante*, § 716, 719 a.

² Mr. Cox, in his note to *Cud v. Rutter*, 1 P. Will. 571, note 2, says: "But cases of this kind depend so much on their own particular circumstances, that it seems no general rule can be laid down." And Lord Redesdale, in a note to his *Treatise on Equity Pleadings*, admits, that it is difficult to reconcile all the cases, in which the courts of equity have compelled the performance of agreements, or refused so to do; and in some cases, where performance has been denied, it is difficult to reconcile the decisions with the principles of equal justice. *Mif. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, p. 119, note (g). Still, perhaps, the equity jurisprudence of England, on this subject, does not deserve the severe reproach of being "the caprices of the English law, in regard to specific performance." See Mr. Austin's *Province of Jurisprudence*, and the Outline appended, cited in the *English Law Magazine*, Vol. XII. p. 235. The able article in that volume on this subject did not fall under my immediate notice, until the main body of these remarks was written. I am glad to find that the author takes the same view of this matter of equity jurisdiction in cases of a specific performance of contracts respecting chattels, which is to be found in the text. It does not strike me that the doctrines maintained in equity are either incongruous or indefensible upon principle. There may be some discrepancies in the authorities; but the main doctrines stand upon the fundamental rule of equity jurisprudence, that there is not a plain, adequate, and complete remedy at law.

³ *Cud v. Rutter*, 1 P. Will. 570, 571; *Nutbrown v. Thornton*, 10 Ves. 161; *Mason v. Armitage*, 13 Ves. 37; *Dorison v. Westbrook*, 5 Vin. Abridg. 540, pl. 22; *Capper v. Harris*, Bunb. 135; *Ferguson v. Paschall*, 11 Miss. 267.

⁴ *Nutbrown v. Thornton*, 10 Ves. 161. See also *Gardner v. Pullen*, 2 Vern. 394; *Forrest v. Elwes*, 4 Ves. 497.

the certificates, which gave the legal title to the stock, upon the ground that a court of law could not give the property; but could only give a remedy in damages, the beneficial effect of which must depend upon the personal responsibility of the party.¹ If this, however, be a sufficient ground to entertain the jurisdiction, it seems universally applicable to all bills for a specific performance. [In cases of a trust created in relation to particular chattels, also, a bill in equity will lie to enforce the trust, and compel a transfer of the property, even although it be bank-shares.² Thus, where A. sold 500 tons of iron stacked on his wharf to B., and in consideration of a bill accepted by a third party, gave an acknowledgment agreeing to deliver the iron to bearer, "as he, A., had been paid for the same," and B. mortgaged the iron, A. was held to be a trustee of the iron, and not allowed to retain it in a suit in equity by the mortgagee.³] In the Supreme Court of the United States, an inclination has been evinced to maintain a far more extensive jurisdiction in equity to grant relief by a specific performance in contracts respecting personal chattels, than is at present exercised in the English courts.⁴

[* § 724 a. We understand the present rule of the English chancery to be, that a specific performance of a contract to convey shares in a railway, or other private corporation, will be decreed, upon the ground that such shares are of uncertain value, and not always readily obtainable in the market.⁵ But it has been de-

¹ *Doloret v. Rothschild*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 590. Besides the ground stated in the text, Sir John Leach added: "I consider also that the plaintiff, not being the original holder of the scrip, but merely the bearer, may not be able to maintain any action at law upon the contract; and that, if he has any title, it must be in equity." *Ibid.* p. 598; *ante*, § 717 and 717 a. Even in regard to stock, a specific performance is sometimes decreed in equity. As, for instance, if a trustee of stock sells it, a *cestui que trust* has an option, either to have it replaced in stock, or the money produced by it with interest. *Forrest v. Elwes*, 4 Ves. 497. [See also *Jackson v. Cocke*, 4 Beavan, 59; *Duncuft v. Albrecht*, 12 Simons, 189; *Fyfe v. Swaby*, 8 Eng. Law & Eq. 184. But it is doubtful whether specific performance will be decreed of the sale of scrip. *Columbine v. Chichester*, 2 Phillips, Ch. 27.]

² *Cowles v. Whitman*, 10 Conn. 121. So of a vessel. *Clark v. Flint*, 22 Pick. 231.

³ *Pooley v. Budd*, 7 Eng. Law & Eq. 229; 14 Beav. 34.

⁴ *Barr v. Lapsley*, 1 Wheat. 151; *Mechanics' Bank of Alexandria v. Seton*, 1 Peters, 305.

⁵ [* *Duncuft v. Albrecht*, 12 Simons, 189; 1 *Redfield on Railw.* § 38.

ided that a specific performance of a contract to convey public stocks will not be decreed, unless under peculiar circumstances, because the value of such stocks is fixed, and it may always be procured in the market.¹ This subject has been recently discussed in the English Court of Chancery Appeal,² and the same rule declared, which is stated above. But in that case the plaintiff failed to obtain a decree, for the reason that he had already conveyed the stock to the defendant's vendee, in ignorance that the defendant was the real purchaser; and the matter having lain by for a whole year, it now seemed impossible to say that the plaintiff had made, or could make, good title to the stock, which is always an insuperable barrier to a decree for specific performance. The latest case upon the subject in the English Court of Chancery Appeal holds, that an agreement to accept a transfer of railway shares, on which nothing had been paid, was not *nudum pactum*, but a contract which may be specifically enforced in equity. Lord Chelmsford, in delivering his judgment, quotes with approbation the words of the Vice Chancellor of England, in *Duncuft v. Albrecht*. "There is not any kind of analogy," said that learned judge, "between a quantity of three per cent, or any other stock of that description (which is always to be had by any person who chooses to apply for it in the market), and a certain number of railway shares of a particular description, which railway shares are limited in number, and which are not always to be had in the market." We regard this as the latest authoritative declaration of the English equity courts upon the subject.³

§ 724 *b*. The same rule is extensively practised upon in the American courts.⁴ But the construction and effect of contracts

¹ 1 Redfield on Railw. § 38, and notes. See also *Nutbrown v. Thornton*, 10 Ves. 159, 161; *Cud v. Rutter*, 1 P. Will. 570; *Doloret v. Rothschild*, 1 S. & S. 590; *Adderley v. Dixon*, *id.* 607; *Adams, Eq.* (ed. 1859) 83, and notes. See also *Colt v. Netterville*, 2 P. Will. 305.

² *Shaw v. Fisher*, 5 De G., M. & G. 596; *Sullivan v. Tuck*, 1 Md. Dec. Ch. 59; *Waters v. Howard*, *id.* 112; *McGowin v. Remington*, 12 Penn. St. 56. See also upon the subject of specific performance in courts of equity, *Adams, Eq.* (ed. 1859) 77-91, and cases cited; *Carpenter v. Ins. Co.*, 4 Sandf. Ch. 408; *Lowry v. Muldrow*, 8 Rich. Eq. 241. See also *Leach v. Fobes*, 11 Gray, 506.

³ *Cheale v. Kenward*, 3 De G. & J. 27. There has been a similar decision by the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, which is not yet reported, it is understood.

Leach v. Fobes, 11 Gray, 506; *Todd v. Taft*, 7 Allen, 371.

for transferring shares in joint-stock companies are regulated to a very large extent by the customs and usages of the stock exchange in England, and we have no reason to question that the same effect will be given to such usages in the American courts. These purchases are always made subject to the risk of future calls.¹ Where the name of an agent is entered upon the registry of shares without his consent, express or implied, he will be entitled to redress and indemnity.² But where one who is entered as purchaser of shares in the transfer, and does not inform the vendor of his not being the actual purchaser in a reasonable time he will be precluded from denying that he was the purchaser of the shares, and he will be bound to indemnify the vendor against future calls, and to pay costs accruing to the vendor.³ On the mortgage of shares it seems that by the custom of the stock exchange the mortgagee is not justified in trading with the same, but must return the identical shares and all gain made in the use of them.⁴]

§ 725. Some of the cases already stated are not purely cases respecting the sale, transfer, or enjoyment of personal chattels; but may properly be deemed to involve personal acts and proceedings. But it is difficult to separate the one class entirely from the other; and they naturally flow into each other. In regard, however, to contracts for personal acts and proceedings, there is some diversity of judgment in the authorities, as to the cases and circumstances in which a specific performance ought to be decreed in equity. Thus, for example, it has been a matter of some conflict of opinion, how far courts of equity ought to entertain a suit for the specific performance of a covenant to build or rebuild a house of a specified form and size on particular land. In the earlier cases, the jurisdiction was maintained;⁵ and Lord Hardwicke recognized it in its full extent, at the same time that

¹ *Hawkins v. Maltby*, Law Rep. 3 Ch. App. 188; s. c. Law Rep. 4 Eq. 572; Law Rep. 6 Eq. 505.

² *Paine v. Hutchinson*, Law Rep. 3 Ch. App. 388.

³ *Shepherd v. Gillespie*, Law Rep. 3 Ch. App. 764; s. c. Law Rep. 5 Eq. 293. Upon the general question of the effect of the custom of the stock exchange upon contracts of this kind, see *Shepherd's case*, Law Rep. 2 Ch. App. 16; *Evans v. Wood*, Law Rep. 5 Eq. 9; *In re Overend, Gurney & Co.*, id. 193; *Cruse v. Paine*, Law Rep. 6 Eq. 641.

⁴ *Langton v. Waite*, Law Rep. 6 Eq. 165.]

⁵ *Holt v. Holt*, 2 Vern. 322; *Allen v. Harding*, 2 Eq. Abridg. 17, Pl. 6; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 7, note (x).

he denied that a covenant to repair a house ought to be specifically performed.¹ The ground of his opinion in the particular case (which was between landlord and tenant) was, that the not building takes away the security of the landlord; but that, upon the covenant to repair, he might have a remedy at law.²

§ 726. On the other hand, in later cases, this doctrine has been expressly denied; and it has been said, that no such covenant ought to be enforced specifically in equity; for, if one will not build, another may. There can be a full compensation at law in damages; and courts of equity ought not to undertake the conduct of a building or rebuilding, any more than of repairs.³ Upon similar grounds, a covenant to make good a gravel-pit at the expiration of a lease, has been refused to be specifically decreed.⁴

§ 727. Still, however, the doctrine, as to a covenant to build or rebuild, can hardly be considered even now as completely settled against the jurisdiction (although the doctrine as to repairs certainly is⁵), since Lord Rosslyn, in one of his leading judgments, maintained, that where the covenant to build or rebuild had a definite certainty as to size, materials, &c., it ought to be decreed in equity to be specifically performed. But, if it was loose, general, or uncertain, there it ought to be left to a suit for damages at law.⁶ This decision, although questioned at the bar, has never been overruled; and, indeed, it has incidentally received some confirmation from the reluctance of courts of equity to shake it.⁷

§ 728. Independently of authority, there are certainly strong reasons, which may be adduced in favor of entertaining the jurisdiction in equity upon a covenant to build or rebuild, in cases

¹ *City of London v. Nash*, 3 Atk. 512, 515; *Pembroke v. Thorpe*, 3 Swanst. 437, note; *Rook v. Worth*, 1 Ves. 461; *Mosely v. Virgin*, 3 Ves. Jr. 184, 185, 186; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 58, p. 465.

² *Ibid.*; *Hill v. Barclay*, 16 Ves. 403, 406; *Rayner v. Stone*, 2 Eden, 128. But see *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, P. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 442.*

³ *Errington v. Aynesly*, 2 Bro. Ch. 343; *Lucas v. Comerford*, 3 Bro. Ch. 167; s. c. 1 Ves. Jr. 235. But see *Mosely v. Virgin*, 3 Ves. 184, 185, 186; *Flint v. Brandon*, 8 Ves. 159, 163, 164. [See *Moore v. Creg*, 12 Jurist, 952, where *Lucas v. Comerford* is disapproved.]

⁴ *Flint v. Brandon*, 8 Ves. 163, 164.

⁵ See *Rayner v. Stone*, 2 Eden, 128, and the Reporter's notes, id. 130; *Hill v. Barclay*, 16 Ves. 405, 406.

⁶ *Mosely v. Virgin*, 3 Ves. Jr. 185.

⁷ *Flint v. Brandon*, 8 Ves. 159, 164.

where the contract has sufficient definiteness and certainty. In the first place, it is by no means clear, that complete and adequate compensation can, in such cases, be obtained at law; for, if the suit is brought before any building or rebuilding by the party claiming the benefit of the covenant, the damages must be quite conjectural, and incapable of being reduced to any absolute certainty; and if the suit is brought afterwards, still the question must be left open, whether more or less than the exact sum required has been expended upon the building, which inquiry must always be at the peril of the plaintiff.¹ In the next place, such a covenant does not admit of an exact compensation in damages from another circumstance, — the changing value of the stock and materials at different times, according to the various demands of the market. In the last place, it seems against conscience to compel a party, at his own peril, to advance his own money to perform what properly belongs to another, when it may often happen, either from his own want of skill or means, that, at every step, he may be obliged to encounter personal obstacles, or to make personal sacrifices, for which no real compensation can ever be made. It would not, therefore, be surprising, if, after all, the doctrine of Lord Rosslyn should obtain a firm hold in equity jurisprudence, as it stands well supported by analogy, as well as by high authority.² The just conclusion, in all such cases, would seem to be, that courts of equity ought not to decline the jurisdiction for a specific performance of contracts, whenever the remedy at law is doubtful in its nature, extent, operation, or adequacy.³

§ 729. In regard to many other contracts for personal acts and proceedings, which are of a very different character, similar observations may apply.⁴ Thus, for instance, a covenant to renew a lease will, as we have seen, be specifically decreed.⁵ So, a covenant to levy a fine of an estate; for it may be indispensable as a muniment of title. So, a covenant to invest money in lands, and settle it in a particular manner.⁶ So, an agreement to settle

¹ See *Bettesworth v. Dean of St. Paul's*, Sel. Cas. in Ch. 68, 69.

² *Ante*, § 727.

³ See *Stuyvesant v. Mayor, &c. of New York*, 11 Paige, 414.

⁴ See *Eden on Injunct.* ch. 2, p. 27.

⁵ *Ante*, § 722; *Furnival v. Carew*, 3 Atk. 87; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 6, p. 96 to 203; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 309.

⁶ *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 6, p. 109; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 312; *post*, § 785.

the boundaries between two estates.¹ So, an agreement for the grant of an annuity, or to charge it on land.² So, an agreement to indorse a bill of exchange, or promissory note, upon a transfer thereof, when it has been omitted by design, or accident, or mistake.³ [So, of a will directing slaves to be sent to Liberia, on their election to go.⁴] So, an assignment of an expectancy, if made upon a valuable consideration.⁵ Many other cases might easily be put to illustrate the same doctrine; as the case of a covenant not to build upon a contiguous estate, to the injury of an ancient messuage; of a covenant not to cut down timber-trees, which are peculiarly ornamental to the mansion of the covenantee; of a covenant not to erect any noisome or injurious manufacturing establishment on an estate adjacent to that of the covenantee; of a covenant not to carry on the same trade with the covenantee in the same street or town; and of a covenant, that a house to be built adjacent to other houses should correspond with them in its elevation.⁶

§ 730. Courts of equity will, upon analogous principles, interpose in many cases, to decree a specific performance of express, and even of implied contracts, where no actual injury has as yet been sustained, but it is only apprehended from the peculiar relation between the parties. This proceeding is commonly called a bill *quia timet*, in analogy to some proceedings at law, where, in some cases, a writ may be maintained before any actual molestation, distress, or impleading of the party.⁷ Thus, as we have seen, a surety may file a bill to compel the debtor, on a bond in which he has joined, to pay the debt when due, whether the surety has been actually sued or not.⁸ And upon a covenant to save harmless, a

¹ Newland on Contracts, ch. 6, p. 109; *Penn. v. Baltimore*, 1 Ves. 444; *post*, § 785.

² *Wellesley v. Wellesley*, 4 Mylne & Craig, 554, 559; *Lyde v. Munn*, 4 Sim. 505; s. c. 1 Mylne & Keen, 683.

³ *Watkins v. Maule*, 2 Jac. & Walk. 242; *ante*, § 99 b.

⁴ *Graham v. Sam*, 7 B. Monroe, 403.

⁵ An assignment of an expectancy is an agreement to assign the interest. If made for a valuable consideration, it may be enforced in equity; otherwise it may not. *Meek v. Kettlewell*, 1 Phillips, Ch. 342. See *Trull v. Eastman*, 3 Met. 121. ⁶ *Franklin v. Tuton*, 5 Mad. 469; *post*, § 926 a.

⁷ *Co. Litt.* 100 a; *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 148; 1 *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 178, 179; *post*, § 825, 826, 850.

⁸ *Ante*, § 327, 722, 729; *post*, § 849, 850; *Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 148;

bill may be filed to relieve the covenantee under similar circumstances.¹ So where property is covenanted to be secured for certain purposes, and in certain events, and there is danger of its being alienated or squandered, courts of equity will interpose to secure the property for original purposes.² And, generally, it may be stated, that in cases of contracts, express or implied, courts of equity will interpose to preserve the funds devoted to particular objects under such contracts, and decree, what in effect is a specific performance, security to be given, or the fund to be placed under the control of the court.³ This subject will present itself in some other aspects hereafter; and does not, therefore, require a fuller development in this place.

§ 731. There is another sort of contract, respecting which there has been no small diversity of opinion, whether a specific performance ought to be decreed or not. It is where a husband covenants that his wife shall levy a fine, or execute any other lawful conveyance, to bar her right in his estate, or in her own estate. There are many cases in which covenants of this sort have been decreed to be specifically performed. And, on one occasion, Sir Joseph Jekyll, Master of the Rolls, said, "There have been a hundred precedents, where, if the husband, for a valuable consideration, covenants that the wife shall join him in a fine, the court has decreed the husband to do it, for he has undertaken it and must lie by it, if he does not perform it."⁴

§ 732. The reason is said to be, because in all such cases it is to *Hayes v. Ward*, 4 Johns. Ch. 132; *Ranlagh v. Hayes*, 1 Vern. 189, 190; s. c. 2 Ch. Cas. 146; *Barnesley v. Powell*, 1 Ves. 283, 284; *Flight v. Cook*, 2 Ves. 619; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 8, and note (y); *Baker v. Shelbury*, 1 Ch. Cas. 70; *Champion v. Brown*, 6 Johns. Ch. 398, 406, 407; *Lee v. Rook*, *Moseley*, 318.

¹ *Ibid.*; *post*, 786, 849, 850; *Champion v. Brown*, 6 Johns. Ch. 398, 406.

² *Flight v. Cook*, 2 Ves. 619; *Green v. Pigot*, 1 Bro. Ch. 108; *Brown v. Dudbridge*, 2 Bro. Ch. 321; *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 148.

³ *Ibid.*; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 8, and note (y). Where a party has agreed to execute a mortgage on an advance of money, and has refused to perform the agreement, a court of equity will often, upon a bill for a specific performance, and praying for a receiver, order a receiver to be appointed. In such a case, the bill is in the nature of a bill *quia timet*, so far as a receiver is prayed for. *Shakel v. Duke of Marlborough*, 4 Mad. 463; *post*, § 845, 846, 847, 850.

⁴ *Hall v. Hardy*, 3 P. Will. 189. See also *Berry v. Wade*, Rep. Temp. Finch. 180; *Barrington v. Horne*, 2 Eq. Abridg. 17, pl. 8; *Withers v. Pinchard*, cited 7 Ves. 475; *Morris v. Stephenson*, 7 Ves. 474.

be presumed that the husband, when he enters into such a covenant, has first gained the wife's consent for that purpose.¹ But this reason is a very insufficient one for so strong a doctrine, for it may be a presumption entirely against the fact, and if correct at the time, the wife may have subsequently withdrawn her consent, and refused, upon very proper grounds, to comply with the covenant. Let us suppose a case in which either there has been no consent, or it has been thus withdrawn; it may then be asked, and indeed it has been asked, with the earnestness of great doubt, whether, if it is impossible for the husband to procure the concurrence of his wife in such a proceeding, a court of equity, acting according to conscience, will decree the husband to perform what it is morally impossible for him to perform.² It seems difficult to maintain the affirmative, especially as a full compensation may generally be obtained by returning the money with interest and damages.³

§ 733. But there is a much stronger ground, upon which the propriety of the doctrine may well be contested. It is the impolicy of endeavoring to compel the husband to use undue influence, and unjustifiable means, inconsistent with the harmony, peace, and confidence of conjugal life, to obtain such a surrender of the rights of the wife. It is offering to him a premium to be ungenerous as well as unjust, and separating his interests, as well as his good faith, from hers.⁴ On this account, Lord Cowper refused to adopt the doctrine, saying, "It is a tender point to compel the husband by a decree to compel his wife to levy a fine, though there have been some precedents in the court for it. And it is a great breach upon the wisdom of the law, which secures the wife's lands from being aliened by the husband, without her free and voluntary consent, to lay a necessity upon the wife to part with her lands or otherwise to be the cause of her husband's lying in prison all his days."⁵

¹ *Winter v. D'Evereux*, cited 3 P. Will. 189, note B; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 6, p. 104, 108.

² *Ante*, p. 701, n. 4. See *Greenaway v. Adams*, 12 Ves. 395, 400.

³ *Ante*, p. 701, n. 4. See *Greenaway v. Adams*, 12 Ves. 395, 400. See *Weed v. Terry*, 2 Doug. 344.

⁴ *Howell v. George*, 1 Mad. 9.

⁵ *Outram v. Round*, 4 Vin. Abridg. *Baron and Feme*, H. b. pl. 4, and marg. p. 203; *Frederick v. Coxwell*, 3 Younge & Jerv. 514.

§ 734. It is true, that this reasoning has not met the approbation of some learned minds in our own times, because, it is suggested, creditors may, by throwing the husband into prison, compel the wife to part with her estate in the same way.¹ But, with great submission, there is a great difference between a court's undertaking to enforce a contract against the policy of the law, and thus sanctioning a violation of conjugal duties, and leaving all parties free to act upon such exigencies as may arise, according to their own sense of the necessities of the case. A court of equity may well decline to enforce a contract, which it might not, under the circumstances, incline to cancel. It is most manifest, that the doctrine has not the support of one of the most able equity judges of England (Lord Eldon), for he has not hesitated to express a very pointed disapprobation of it. "If this was perfectly *res integra*" (said he), "I should hesitate long before I should say, the husband is to be understood to have gained her consent, and the presumption is to be, that he obtained it before the bargain, to avoid all fraud that may be afterwards practised to procure it."²

¹ *Morris v. Stephenson*, 7 Vès. 474, and *Withers v. Pinchard*, there cited.

² *Emery v. Wase*, 8 Ves. 514, 515. See also *Howell v. George*, 1 Mad. 9; *Davis v. Jones*, 4 Bos. & Pull. 267; *Martin v. Mitchell*, 2 Jac. & Walk. 425; *Mortlock v. Buller*, 10 Ves. 305; *Innes v. Jackson*, 16 Ves. 367. The reasoning of Lord Eldon is so forcible, that it deserves to be here given at large. "Certainly the general point is of great importance, whether the contract of the husband — which, however, this was not intended to be, but that of the daughters — is to be executed against the husband by a court of equity; in effect compelling the husband to compel his wife to levy a fine, which is a voluntary act. This is brought forward in the report as the principal ground of the decree. The argument shows that point is not quite so well settled as it has been understood to be. The policy of the law is, that a wife is not to part with her property, but by her own spontaneous and free will. If this was perfectly *res integra*, I should hesitate long before I should say the husband is to be understood to have gained her consent, and the presumption is to be made that he obtained it before the bargain, to avoid all the fraud that may be afterwards practised to procure it. I should have hesitated long in following up that presumption, rather than the principle of the policy of the law; for, if a man chooses to contract for the estate of a married woman, or an estate subject to dower, he knows the property is hers altogether, or to a given extent. The purchaser is bound to regard the policy of the law; and what right has he to complain, if she, who, according to law, cannot part with her property but by her own free will, expressed at the time of that act of record, takes advantage of the *locus panitentia*? And why is he not to take his chance of damages against the husband? If cases have determined this question so that no consideration of the absurdity that must

§ 735. Where, indeed, there is no pretence to say, that the wife is not ready and willing to consent to the act, and that defence is not set up in the answer, but the objections to the decree are put wholly upon other distinct grounds, there may be less difficulty in making a decree for a specific performance.¹ Even in such a case a court of equity ought not to decree in so important a matter, affecting the wife's interest, without bringing her directly before the court, and obtaining her consent upon full deliberation. But where the answer expressly shows an inability of the husband to

arise, and the almost ridiculous state in which this court must in many instances be placed, can prevail against their authority, it must be so. For the sake of illustration, suppose £10,000 three per cents, carried to the account of a married woman, and the husband contracts to transfer (taking it, that the court had jurisdiction to decree performance of such a contract), at the hearing, what is to be done for the wife? In the last two cases, the wife appears to have been left a party to the suit, without affecting her under the decree. If the court cannot by the decree order an act to be done by her, the bill ought to be dismissed against her, unless some future act by her, to be ordered upon further directions, is looked to. But the principle of the decree shows that cannot be the purpose. It does not rest there. Suppose the husband procures her consent, even by the mildest means, — persuades and influences her by the difficulties he has got into, on entering into an improvident contract, and she is examined here by the judge who has made the decree upon the husband, and if upon the submission of all the considerations which ought to be submitted to her in this court and the Court of Common Pleas, she says, she thinks it, in her situation, not fit for her to part with the property, the court must send the husband to jail, telling her she never ought to relieve him from that state. And all this for the benefit of a person who cannot have a specific performance certainly, but who may have damages, and who sets up his title to a specific performance in opposition to the policy of the law. Upon the first ground, therefore, there is difficulty enough to make me pause, before I should follow the last two authorities. And I am not sure, whether it is not proper to have the judgment of the House of Lords, to determine which of these decisions ought to bind us. As to the expression used by Lord Cowper, that this jurisdiction is to be very sparingly exercised; certainly, it is very dissatisfactory to be informed, that it is, and is not, to be done." See also the opinion of Sir Thomas Plumer, in *Howell v. George*, 1 *Mad.* 9, who says: "It could not be argued, that a man should be compelled to use his marital and parental authority to compel his wife and son to do acts which ought only to be spontaneously done." Sir James Mansfield, also, in *Davis v. Jones* (4 *Bos. & Pull.* 267), said: "Nothing can be more absurd, than to allow a married woman to be compelled to levy a fine, through fear of her husband being sued and thrown into jail, when the general principle of the law is, that a married woman shall not be compelled to levy a fine." See also *Frederick v. Coxwell*, 3 *Y. & Jerv.* 514.

¹ *Morris v. Stephenson*, 7 *Ves.* 474.

comply with the covenant, and a firm refusal of the wife, it will require more reasoning than has yet appeared, to sustain the justice, or equity, or policy, of the doctrine.¹

[§ 735 *a*. Another contract concerning husband and wife, which may be enforced in a court of equity, is a contract for their separation. It has sometimes been argued that chancery could not interfere to decree a separation between husband and wife ;² but the contrary is now fully settled.³]

§ 736. In cases of covenants and other contracts, where a specific performance is sought, it is often material to consider, how far the reciprocal obligations of the party, seeking the relief, have been fairly and fully performed. For if the latter have been disregarded, or they are incapable of being substantially performed on the part of the party so seeking relief, or from their nature they have ceased to have any just application by subsequent events, or it is against public policy to enforce them, courts of equity will not interfere.⁴ Thus, where two persons had agreed to work a coach from Bristol to London, one providing the horses for a part of the road, and the other for the remainder ; and, in consequence of the horses of the latter being taken in execution, the former was obliged to furnish horses for the whole road, and claimed the whole profits ; the court, on a bill by the party, who was so in default, for an account of the profits, and to restrain the other party from working the coaches with his own horses on the whole road, refused to interfere ; because the default might again occur, and subject the defendant to an action.⁵ So, where, upon a grant of certain land with a well in it, there was a covenant by the grantees not to sell or dispose of the water from the well, to the injury of the proprietors of certain waterworks intended for the public supply, but not deriving their supply from the well ; upon a bill for an injunction, the court refused to interfere, on account of the inconveniences, saying, that, although the court will in many cases interfere to restrain a breach of covenant, yet there

¹ See *Howell v. George*, 1 Mad. 9 ; *Davis v. Jones*, 4 Bos. & Pull. 267 ; *Martin v. Mitchell*, 2 Jac. & Walk. 425.

² See *Westmeath v. Westmeath*, 2 Hagg. Ec. Supp. 115 ; *Seeling v. Cranley*, 2 Vern. 386 ; *Head v. Head*, 3 Atk. 547 ; *Wilkes v. Wilkes*, 2 Dick. 791 ; *Fletcher v. Fletcher*, 2 Cox, 99.

³ *Wilson v. Wilson*, 31 Eng. Law & Eq. 29.

⁴ See *Stewart v. Raymond Railroad Co.*, 7 S. & M. 568.

⁵ *Smith v. Fromont*, 2 Swanst. 330.

was no instance to be met with of such a covenant as this. For, here, the court must in each instance try whether the act of selling any specified quantity of water was a prejudice to the proprietors of the waterworks or not; and that upon such a covenant so framed a court of equity ought not to entertain jurisdiction, even if there were no objection on the score of public policy.¹

[§ 736 *a*. But it is not necessary to the specific performance of a written agreement that it should be signed by the party seeking to enforce it; if the agreement is certain, fair, and just in all its parts, and signed by the party sought to be charged, that is sufficient; the want of mutuality in the signature merely is no objection to its enforcement.² But a bond duly executed by the obligors, with a blank space for the name of the obligee, being void at law, is inoperative in equity as an agreement, for want of a second contracting party.³

[* § 736 *b*. When an offer in writing is made by the owner to sell an estate, on specified terms, and this is unconditionally accepted, there is a binding contract, which neither party can vary. But until the proposition is accepted, the owner is at liberty to add new terms to his proposal, and if these be refused the treaty is at an end. The time for paying the deposit may be made an essential term for entering into the contract.⁴

§ 736 *c*. And in a very late case⁵ it was held that letters will not constitute an agreement which will be specifically performed,

¹ *Collins v. Plumb*, 16 Ves. 454. This case turned upon its own special circumstances, and cannot be admitted to be an authority for any general doctrine on the subject. If the Waterworks Company had derived their supply of water from the well, there is no doubt that a court of equity would have interfered to prevent the party from violating his covenant to the injury of the company. In the actual posture of the case then before the court, the object of the covenant seemed to have been, to secure to the company the monopoly of water for the supply of the inhabitants of the town, and other persons resorting thereto, against any competition by a sale of the water of the well. The case seems to have been decided upon very mixed considerations, as there are several other points before the court; and it must be admitted not to have been decided upon very satisfactory grounds.

² *Woodward v. Aspinwall*, 3 Sandf. 272. *In re Hunter*, 1 Edw. Ch. 1; *McCrea v. Purmort*, 16 Wend. 460; *Clason v. Bailey*, 14 Johns. 484.

³ *Squire v. Whiton*, 1 House of Lords Cases, 333. See *Geigen v. Green*, 4 Gill, 472.

⁴ [* *Honeyman v. Marryatt*, 21 Beavan, 14.

⁵ *Wright v. St. George*, 12 Ir. Ch. 226.

unless the answer is a simple acceptance, without the introduction of a new term. But a contract binding upon a corporation and which the courts of equity will specifically perform, may be constituted by correspondence merely.¹ But if the contract be not actually concluded and certain in all its parts, as if the matter still rests, to any extent in treaty, or be uncertain or undefined, in any particular, a court of equity will not interfere, by way of specific performance.² Specific performance is sometimes denied in railway cases, where the public interest would be thereby seriously affected.³

§ 737. So, where a conveyance in fee had been made of certain lands in the city of London, and the feoffee covenanted not to use the land in a particular manner, with a view to the more ample enjoyment of the adjoining lands by the feoffor; and afterwards, by the voluntary acts of the feoffor and those claiming under him, the character and condition of the adjoining land had been so greatly altered, that the contemplated benefits were entirely gone; the court refused to interfere to compel a specific performance by injunction, and left the party to his remedy at law on the covenant.⁴ [But in the subsequent case, where A. purchased a piece of ground in the centre of a square in London, and covenanted not to use it otherwise than as a pleasure-ground, an injunction was granted, restraining a subsequent purchaser from A. from using the ground in violation of the covenant.⁵]

¹ *Prince v. Prince*, 12 Jur. n. s. 221. And where one of the terms of sale was, that if the vendee should insist upon any requisition that the vendor could not comply with, the latter should be at liberty by notice to annul the contract, and the vendee made a requisition that certain persons should concur in the sale and the sale not being completed, filed his bill for specific performance, insisting in the bill upon his requisition, and the vendor two months after, finding he could not comply with the requisition, gave notice to that effect, but the vendee still insisting upon the requisition, he gave notice to rescind the contract, it was held to have determined it, notwithstanding the vendor afterwards offered to waive the requisition and accept performance without it. *Duddell v. Simpson*, 12 Jur. n. s. 969.

² *McKibbin v. Brown*, 1 McCarter, 13; *Earl v. Halsey*, id. 332. As to specific performance against lunatics, see *Yauger v. Skinner*, id. 389.

³ *Raphael v. The Thames Valley Railway Co.*, 12 Jur. n. s. 656; s. c. *Law Rep.* 2 Eq. 37.]

⁴ *Duke of Bedford v. Trustees of the British Museum*, 2 Mylne & K. 552. See also *Kepple v. Bailey*, 2 Mylne & K. 517.

⁵ *Tulk v. Moxhay*, 13 Jurist, 89; 2 Phillips, 774. And see *The Feoffees of Heriot's Hospital v. Gibson*, 2 Dow, 301.

[* § 737 *a*. Where any question arises in regard to the defendant having understood the contract, in all its details, the court, if they decree specific performance, will not vary the terms to meet the defendant's misapprehension.¹ So, also, where it is claimed that the plaintiff has not performed all the stipulations of the contract on his part, the proper decree is to direct the contract to be dated, at a time anterior to the alleged breaches, and to require from the plaintiff an undertaking to admit the execution, as of the day it bears date, in any action brought upon the contract.² It seems to be regarded as an insuperable barrier to a decree for specific performance in the courts of equity, that the plaintiff, before the filing of his bill, had failed in an attempt to enforce the agreement at law.³ Where the court assume jurisdiction of a case for specific performance of the general stipulations of a contract, it may award the payment of a sum of money, by way of damages, for the breach of some incidental stipulation.⁴ A defendant may always resist a decree for specific performance, upon the ground that he had made an innocent mistake in stating the conditions of sale.⁵]

§ 738. Before proceeding to the remaining head of specific performance, that of contracts respecting real estate, which will occupy our attention to a far greater extent, it may be proper to mention, that before Lord Somers's time, the practice used to be, on bills for a specific performance, to send the party to law; and if he recovered any thing by way of damages, the Court of Chancery then entertained a suit; otherwise the bill was dismissed.⁶

¹ [* *Parker v. Taswell*, 2 De G. & J. 559.

² *Pain v. Coombs*, 1 De G. & J. 34.

³ *Swinfen v. Swinfen*, 2 De G. & J. 381.

⁴ *Lillie v. Legh*, 3 De Gex & J. 204. See also *Capps v. Holt*, 5 Jones, Eq. 153.

⁵ *Wood v. Scarth*, 2 Kay & Johnson, 33. See also *The Marquis of Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Vesey, 328; *Duke of Beaufort v. Neeld*, 12 Cl. & F. 248.]

⁶ *Dodsley v. Kinnersley*, Ambler, 406; 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 288; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 5, note (e); id. B. 1, ch. 3, § 1, note (e); *Normanby v. Duke of Devonshire*, 2 Freem. 217, and Mr. Hovenden's note; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 425*. According to Mr. Butler, the old practice in courts of equity was, in all cases, first to send the party to law, to ascertain whether there was any remedy there, or not. If there was no remedy at law, then equity would interfere. His language is: "The grand reason for the interference of a court of equity is, that the imperfection of a legal remedy, in consequence of the universality of legislative provisions, may be redressed. Hence

And, hence the opinion was not uncommon, that, unless damages were recoverable at law, no suit could be maintained in equity, for a specific performance. Accordingly, it was laid down in a celebrated case by Lord Chief Justice Raymond, that "where damages are to be recovered at law, for the breach of covenant, equity will compel a specific execution of such act, for the not doing of which the law gives damages; and that, for this reason, as an adequate compensation is to be made on the covenant, the quantum of the damages may be very uncertain; and, therefore, to prevent that uncertainty, equity will enforce a specific execution of the thing."¹ At present no such practice prevails; and therefore, the rule is not applied, as it certainly ought not to be applied, as a test of jurisdiction.

§ 739. But there is very great reason to doubt if the rule ever was generally applied at any former period; for many cases must always have existed, in which damages were not recoverable at law, but in which a specific performance would nevertheless be decreed.² The rule was probably confined to cases in which the party was not entitled to any remedy at law, and there was no equity to be administered beyond the law.³ Lord Macclesfield denied the existence of the rule altogether, and said: "Neither is it a true rule which has been laid down by the other side, that where an action cannot be brought at law on an agreement for damages, there, a suit will not lie in equity for a specific performance."⁴ And, accordingly, in the very case then before him, he gave relief, although there could be no remedy at law. It was a case where a feme sole gave a bond to her intended husband, that,

for a length of time after the introduction of equitable judicature into this country, it was thought necessary that, before equity should interfere, this imperfection should be manifested by the party's previously proceeding at law, so far as to show, from its result, the want or inadequacy of legal redress, and his claim for equitable relief. This inflicted upon him two judicial suits, and consequently a double expense. To remedy this grievance, it became the practice, particularly from the time in which the seals were intrusted to Lord Cowper, to dispense with the previous legal suit, when the want or inadequacy of the legal remedy to be obtained by it was evident." 1 Butler, *Reminis.* 39, 40.

¹ *Bettesworth v. Dean of St. Paul's*, Sel. Cas. in Ch. 68, 69; *post*, § 755, note.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 5, note (e); *id.* B. 1, ch. 3, § 1, note (c); 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 288.

³ See Sugden on Vendors, ch. 4, § 2, p. 201, 202 (7th edit.).

⁴ *Cannel v. Buckle*, 2 P. Will. 244.

in case of their marriage, she would convey her lands to him in fee. They afterwards married; and the wife died without issue, and then the husband died. And it was held that, although the bond was void at law, yet it was good evidence of an agreement; and the heir of the husband could compel a specific performance against the heir of the wife.¹

§ 740. Lord Macclesfield, on that occasion, put another case. If a feme infant, seised in fee, on a marriage, with the consent of her guardians, should covenant, in consideration of a settlement, to convey her inheritance to her husband, and the settlement were competent, a court of equity would decree a specific execution of the agreement, although no action at law would lie to recover damages.² Another case may also be put. If an agreement be made for the sale of an estate, and the vendor dies before the period when the estate is to be conveyed, the heir of the vendor will, in equity, be bound to convey, although no action lies at law against him.³

§ 741. It has been said, in a late case, that it may be safely laid down, as a general proposition, notwithstanding many exceptions, that an agreement, in order to call for a specific performance by the decree of a court of equity, must be such an agreement as might have been made the subject of an action at law.⁴ This language, when understood in a qualified sense, is doubtless correct; for, generally, if a party does not contract personally at law, equity will not create a personal obligation on his part unless under peculiar circumstances.⁵ But the whole class of cases of specific performance of contracts respecting real estate, where the contract is by parol, and there has been a part-performance, or where the terms of the contract have not been strictly complied with, and yet equity relieves the party, are proofs that the right to maintain a suit in equity, to compel a specific performance, does

¹ *Ibid.* See also *Acton v. Pierce*, 2 Vern. 480.

² *Cannel v. Buckle*, 2 P. Will. 244, and Mr. Cox's note (2).

³ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 288. See also *Wiseman v. Roper*, 1 Rep. in Chan. 158; *Attorney General v. Day*, 1 Ves. 222; *Whitmel v. Farrel*, 1 Ves. 258; *Gell v. Vermedun*, 2 Freem. 199; *Sugden on Vendors* (7th edit.), ch. 4, § 2, p. 180; 1 *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 4, § 3, n. 3, p. 321 (10th edit.); *post*, § 755, note. See *Leland's Appeal*, 1 Harris, 84.

⁴ *Sir Wm. Grant*, in *Williams v. Steward*, 3 Meriv. 491.

⁵ See *Com. Dig. Chancery, Rent*, which cites *Davy v. Davy*, 1 Ch. Cas. 145; *Palmer v. Whettenhall*, 1 Ch. Cas. 184, 185.

not, and cannot properly be said to depend upon the party's having a right to maintain a suit at law for damages.¹ In cases of specific performance, courts of equity sometimes follow the law, and sometimes go far beyond the law; and their doctrines, if not wholly independent of the point, whether damages would be given at law, are not in general dependent upon it. Whoever should assume the existence of a right to damages in an action at law, as the true test of the jurisdiction in equity, would find himself involved in endless perplexity;² for, sometimes damages may be recoverable at law, where courts of equity would yet not decree a specific performance; and, on the other hand, damages may not be recoverable at law, and yet relief would be granted in equity.³

§ 742. In truth, the exercise of this whole branch of equity jurisprudence, respecting the rescission and specific performance of contracts, is not a matter of right in either party; but it is a matter of discretion in the court;⁴ not, indeed, of arbitrary or capricious discretion, dependent upon the mere pleasure of the judge, but of that sound and reasonable discretion, which governs itself as far as it may, by general rules and principles; but at the same time, which withholds or grants relief, according to the circumstances of each particular case, when these rules and principles will not furnish any exact measure of justice between the parties.⁵ On this account it is not possible to lay down any rules and princi-

¹ *Davis v. Hone*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 347, 348; *Lennon v. Napper*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 684; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 4, § 2, p. 192 (7th edit.); 1 *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 4, § 3, n. 14, p. 330 (10th edit.); *id.* n. 35, p. 340; *id.* n. 59, p. 351; *Alley v. Deschamps*, 13 Ves. 228, 229.

² See *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 4, § 2, p. 200 to 202 (7th edit.); 3 *Wooddes. Lect.* 58, p. 463; *Williams v. Steward*, 3 Meriv. 486.

³ *Weale v. West Middlesex Water Works Company*, 1 Jac. & Walk. 370.

⁴ *City of London v. Nash*, 1 Ves. 13; s. c. 3 Atk. 512; *Joynes v. Statham*, 3 Atk. 389; *Underwood v. Hitchcox*, 1 Ves. 279; *Clowes v. Higginson*, 1 Ves. & B. 527; 1 *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 287; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 1, ch. 3, § 9, note (i); *Sugden on Vendors* (7th edit.), ch. 4, § 2, p. 191; 1 *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 4, § 3, n. 330 (10th edit.); *St. John v. Benedict* 6 Johns. Ch. 111; *Seymour v. Delancey*, 6 Johns. Ch. 222; *ante*, § 207; *Seaman v. Van Rensselaer*, 10 Barbour, 83.

⁵ See 3 *Wooddes. Lect.* 58, p. 466; *White v. Damon*, 7 Ves. 35; *Buckle v. Mitchell*, 18 Ves. 111; *Mason v. Armitage*, 13 Ves. 37; *Clowes v. Higginson*, 1 Ves. & Beam. 527; *Moore v. Blake*, 1 B. & Beat. 69; *Howell v. George* 1 *Mad.* 9; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 4, § 2, p. 191 (7th edit.); 1 *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 4, § 3, n. 14, p. 330 (10th edit.); *ante*, § 693; *post*, § 769; *Wedgewood v. Adams*, 6 Beavan, 600.

ples, which are of absolute obligation and authority in all cases; and, therefore, it would be a waste of time to attempt to limit the principles, or the exceptions, which the complicated transactions of the parties, and the ever-changing habits of society may, at different times, and under different circumstances, require the court to recognize or consider. The most that can be done is, to bring under review some of the leading principles and exceptions, which the past times have furnished, as guides to direct and aid our future inquiries.

§ 743. Let us now, in the next place, proceed to the consideration of the remaining and far most numerous class of cases, in which courts of equity are called upon to decree a specific performance of contracts; that is to say, contracts respecting land.¹ In examining this subject, our attention will almost exclusively be drawn to cases of contracts respecting land, situate in the same country where the suit is brought. It may, therefore, be proper to premise that a bill for a specific performance of a contract respecting land may be entertained by courts of equity, although the land is situate in a foreign country, if the parties are resident within the territorial jurisdiction of the court. The ground of this jurisdiction is, that courts of equity have authority to act upon the person; *Æquitas agit in personam*.² And although they cannot bind the land itself by their decree, yet they can bind the conscience of the party in regard to the land, and compel him to perform his agreement according to conscience and good faith.³ Accordingly, it was held by Lord Hardwicke, that the specific performance of a contract, respecting the boundaries of the Colonies of Pennsylvania and Maryland, entered into by the proprietaries, might be decreed by the Court of Chancery in England.⁴ The like doctrine was held in the case of an agreement respecting the Isle of Man, where a specific performance was decreed by the Court of Chancery in

¹ For the sake of brevity, land only is mentioned; but the same principles will apply generally to all other real property, and incorporeal hereditaments, savoring of the realty.

² *Toller v. Carteret*, 2 Vern. 495; *post*, § 899, 900; *Sutton v. Fowler*, 9 Paige, 280.

³ *Com. Dig. Chancery*, 3 X. 4 W. 27; *Lord Cranstown v. Johnston*, 3 Ves. Jr. 182; *Massie v. Watts*, 6 Cranch, 148, 158.

⁴ *Penn v. Lord Baltimore*, 1 Ves. 444; *Portarlington v. Soulby*, 3 Mylne & Keen, 104.

England, although the isle was without the realm.¹ In like manner, in a contract respecting lands in Ireland, a specific performance has been decreed.²

§ 744. The proposition may, therefore, be laid down in the most general form, that, to entitle a court of equity to maintain a bill for the specific performance of a contract respecting land, it is not necessary that the land should be situate within the jurisdiction of the state or country where the suit is brought.³ It is sufficient that the parties, to be affected and bound by the decree, are resident within the state or country where the suit is brought; for in all suits in equity the primary decree is *in personam* and not *in rem*.⁴ The incapacity to enforce the decree *in rem* constitutes no objection to the right to entertain such a suit.⁵ Where, indeed, the lands lie within the reach of the process of the court, courts of equity will not exclusively rely on the proceedings *in personam*; but will put the successful party in possession of the lands, if the other party remains obstinate, and refuses to comply with the decree.⁶

[§ 744 a. On the other hand, it has recently been determined in America, after a full review of all the authorities, that a court of equity has no jurisdiction in cases touching lands in foreign countries, unless the relief sought is of such a nature as the court is capable of administering in the given case; a court of

¹ Earl of Athol v. Earl of Derby, 1 Ch. Cas. 221; Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 X. 4 W. 27; Portarlington v. Soulby, 3 Mylne & K. 104; *post*, § 899, 900.

² Archer v. Preston, cited 1 Vern. 77; s. c. 1 Eq. Abr. 133.

³ See De Klyn v. Watkins, 3 Sandf. Ch. 185; Fairley v. Shippen, Wythe, Ch. 135; Guerrant v. Fowler, 1 Hen. & Munf. 4; Shattuck v. Cassidy, 3 Edw. Ch. 152.

⁴ Newland on Contr. ch. 16, p. 305; Com. Dig. Chancery, 3 X. 4 W. 27; Penn v. Lord Baltimore, 1 Ves. 447, 454; Archer v. Preston, 1 Eq. Abr. 133; s. c. 1 Vern. 77, and Mr. Raithby's note; Lord Cranstown v. Johnston, 3 Ves. Jr. 182; Jackson v. Petrie, 10 Ves. 164; Foster v. Vassall, 3 Atk. 589; Pike v. Hoare, 2 Eden, 185, and note; White v. Hall, 12 Ves. 323; Massie v. Watts, 6 Cranch, 148, 158; Story on Conflict of Laws, § 544, 545; Ward v. Arredondo, 1 Hopk. 213; Mead v. Merritt, 2 Paige, 402; Sutton v. Fowler, 9 Paige, 280.

⁵ Earl of Arglasse v. Muschamp, 1 Vern. 135.

⁶ Earl of Arglasse v. Muschamp, 1 Vern. 135; Earl of Kildare v. Eustace, 1 Vern. 421; Penn v. Lord Baltimore, 1 Ves. 454; Hide v. Petit, 1 Ch. Cas. 91; Newland on Contracts, ch. 16, p. 305, 306; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 5, note (q); Roberdeau v. Rous, 1 Atk. 643; Stribley v. Hawkie, 3 Atk. 275.

equity has not necessarily jurisdiction over a subject of ordinary equity cognizance, simply because the parties are within the forum. Accordingly it was held, that a court of equity sitting in, and for one county in the State of Pennsylvania, had no jurisdiction over a bill praying for an injunction against the defendant residing in another county, but who was temporarily within the jurisdiction of the court, for erecting a nuisance which injured the plaintiff's land in that county; for, to give a complete remedy in such cases, a court must not only restrain and prevent the continuance of the nuisance, but must order its removal, and give compensation in damages for the injury already caused; and for a court of equity to give this ample relief, the *locus in quo* must be within the absolute jurisdiction of the court.¹ So, it seems, a court has no jurisdiction to order a defendant to sell lands situate in a foreign jurisdiction, when the case would be otherwise within its power.² Nor will a court of equity enforce against defendants who have in their hands proceeds of the sale of lands situated out of the jurisdiction, the same equities to which such proceeds would have been unquestionably subject, had the land sold been within the jurisdiction. The exercise of such a power seems to depend upon the fact whether the contract sought to be enforced was capable of being fulfilled by the *lex loci rei sitæ*. And this, although the parties are within the jurisdiction, and the proceeds of the land come into their hands, *in specie*. And if, by the *lex loci rei sitæ*, the land could be alienated only upon the application of the proceeds in a particular manner, such a law is valid, and courts of equity will not interfere with such proceeds, though brought within its jurisdiction.³

§ 745. But to return to the class of cases where a specific performance is sought on contracts respecting land, situate in the country where the suit is brought. This class may be subdivided into two heads. (1) Where relief is sought upon parol contracts within the statute of frauds and perjuries (as it is called); and

¹ *Morris v. Remington*, 1 Parsons, Eq. 387.

² *Blount v. Blount*, 1 Hawks, 365.

³ *Waterhouse v. Stansfield*, 12 Eng. Law & Eq. 206; 9 Hare, 234. [* Courts will not undertake to decree specific performance of contracts concerning lands in another State, unless all the parties to be affected by the decree are within the jurisdiction of the court. *Penn v. Hayward*, 14 Ohio, n. s. 302.]

(2) where it is sought under written contracts, not falling within the scope of that statute.

§ 746. It has been already suggested, that courts of equity are in the habit of interposing to grant relief, in cases of contracts respecting real property, to a far greater extent than in cases respecting personal property; not, indeed, upon the ground of any distinction, founded upon the mere nature of the property, as real or as personal; but at the same time, not wholly excluding the consideration of such a distinction. In regard to contracts respecting personal estate, it is (as has already been intimated) generally true that no particular or peculiar value is attached to any one thing over another of the same kind; and that a compensation in damages meets the full merits, as well as the full objects, of the contracts. If a man contracts for the purchase of a hundred bales of cotton, or boxes of sugar, or bags of coffee, of a particular description or quality, if the contract is not specifically performed, he may, generally, with a sum equal to the market-price, purchase other goods of the same kind of a like description and quality; and thus completely obtain his object, and indemnify himself against loss.¹ But, in contracts respecting a specific message or parcel of land, the same considerations do not ordinarily apply. The locality, character, vicinage, soil, easements or accommodations of the land generally, may give it a peculiar and special value in the eyes of the purchaser; so that it cannot be replaced by other land of the same precise value, but not having the same precise local conveniences or accommodations;² and, therefore, a compensation in damages would not be adequate relief. It would not attain the object desired; and it would generally frustrate the plans of the purchaser. And hence it is, that the jurisdiction of courts of equity to decree specific performance, is, in cases of contracts respecting land, universally maintained;³ whereas, in cases respecting chattels, it is limited to special circumstances.

§ 747. Courts of equity, too, in cases of contracts respecting real property, have been in the habit of granting this relief, not only to a greater extent, but also under circumstances far more various and more indulgent than in cases of contracts respecting chattels. For they do not confine themselves to cases of a strict

¹ *Ante.* § 716, 717, 718 to 724.

² *Adderley v. Dixon*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 607; *ante*, § 718.

³ *Foss v. Haynes*, 31 Maine, 89.

legal title to relief. Another principle, equally beneficial, is well known and established, that courts of equity will not permit the forms of law to be made the instruments of injustice; and they will, therefore, interpose against parties, attempting to avail themselves of the rigid rules of law for unconscientious purposes. When, therefore, advantage is taken of a circumstance that does not admit of a strict performance in the contract, if the failure is not in a matter of substance, courts of equity will interfere.¹ Thus, they are in the habit of relieving in contracts for real property, where the party, from his own inadvertence or neglect, has suffered the proper time to elapse for the punctilious performance of his contract, and, from that and other circumstances, he cannot maintain an action to recover damages at law.² Even where nothing exists to prevent the party's suing at law, so many circumstances are necessary to enable him to recover at law, that the more formal proofs alone render it very inconvenient and hazardous so to proceed, even if the legal remedy would (as in many cases it would not) be adequate to the demands of substantial justice.³

§ 748. On these accounts (as has been well remarked), courts of equity have enforced contracts of this sort, where no action for damages could be maintained; for, at law, the party plaintiff must have strictly performed his part; and the inconvenience of insisting upon that in all cases is sufficient to require the interference of courts of equity. They dispense with that which would make a compliance with what the law requires oppressive; and, in various

¹ *Halsey v. Grant*, 13 Ves. 76, 77; *post*, § 775, 776, 777.

² *Post*, § 771, 775, 776, 777.

³ A party may maintain a bill in equity for the specific performance of a contract to convey land, notwithstanding he may have full remedy at law for recovering the value of the lands that bring, in most cases, no adequate relief. *Schoepel v. Hopper*, 40 Barb. 425. But see *Pennsylvania Co. v. Delaware Co.*, 31 N. Y. 91. So also notwithstanding one may have conveyed land with warranty, he may maintain a bill in equity to compel the specific performance of a contract to release a mortgage upon the land. *Bennett v. Abrams*, 41 Barb. 619; *Stark v. Belder*, 36 Vt. 752. The court will exercise its discretion in decreeing specific performance of contracts to convey land, and where there was a prior equitable right to the land from the vendor known to the vendee at the time of his contract of purchase, he will take the land even under a decree for specific performance, subject to the same equities. *Smoot v. Rea*, 19 Md. 398. See also *Smith v. Crandall*, 20 id. 482; *Dean v. Comstock*, 32 Ill. 173. *Laverty v. Moore*, 33 N. Y. 658; *Hunter v. Bales*, 24 Ind. 299.

cases of such contracts, they are in the constant habit of relieving a party who has acted fairly, although negligently.¹

749. On the other hand, as the interference of courts of equity is discretionary, they will not enforce a specific performance of such contracts at the instance of the vendor, where his title is involved in difficulties which cannot be removed, although, perhaps, at law, an action might be maintainable against the defendant for damages for his not completing his purchase.²

[* § 749 a. The plaintiff in a bill for specific performance of a contract for the lease of a limestone quarry, had at the time of the sale represented that the limestone was of a certain quality, the fact being that the quarry in the immediate neighborhood had been worked and ascertained not to be of the specified quality. The result of this trial was not known to either party, but might have been ascertained on inquiry, and it appeared the plaintiff had no knowledge of the quality of the limestone. The defendant afterwards and before signing the agreement made a cursory inspection of the old quarry, and satisfied himself that the stone was limestone, but ascertained nothing of its quality. It was held that the misrepresentation was a bar to the decree for specific performance.³

§ 749 b. And it seems to be settled now in the English courts of equity, that where the party against whom the decree is sought shows to the satisfaction of the court, that he entered into the contract under a *bonâ fide* misapprehension in a material point, the contract will not be carried into effect. Thus where A. by letter offered to sell some property to B. for £1,250, and B. by letter accepted the offer, and A. had by mistake inserted £1,250, in his letter, instead of £2,250, and so informed B. immediately, the court refused to enforce the contract.⁴

§ 749 c. The present English statute⁵ provides that, in all cases

¹ Lord Redesdale, in *Lennon v. Napper*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 684.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 9, note (i); *post*, § 777, 778; *Cooper v. Denne*, 4 Bro. Ch. 80, s. c. 1 Ves. Jr. 565.

³ [* *Higgins v. Samels*, 2 Johns. & H. 460.

⁴ *Webster v. Cecil*, 30 Beav. 62; *Butterworth v. Walker*, 13 W. R. 168; *Moxey v. Bigwood*, 12 id. 811; *Park v. Johnson*, 4 Allen, 259.

⁵ 21 & 22 Vict. ch. 27, § 2. But if the defendant claim in defence that the contract was obtained from him by misrepresentation, he assumes the burden of proving it. *Park v. Johnson*, 4 Allen, 259. See also *Wycombe Railw. Co. v. Donnington Hospital*, in Court of Chancery Appeals, 12 Jur. n. s. 347; *Law Rep.* 1 Ch. App. 268.

of contracts respecting the conveyance of real estate, the courts of equity may award damages for the breach of the same. This is not understood as entitling the plaintiff to an award of damages to be assessed, in cases where he had no good reason to suppose a bill for specific performance would be sustained; but there are many cases where, under the statute, the court will decree the assessment of damages, if for any cause they do not deem it expedient to decree specific performance; or where the defendant could not grant the lease, on account of the mortgagee refusing to concur with him.¹ So also the court will sometimes decree an assessment of damages for the breach of contract up to the time of specific performance being carried into effect.² And we apprehend courts of equity commonly assume to award the assessment of damages, in all cases without statutory aid, when it becomes indispensable in order to do perfect justice between the parties in carrying the specific performance of a contract into effect.]

§ 750. Indeed, the proposition may be more generally stated, that courts of equity will not interfere to decree a specific performance, except in cases where it would be strictly equitable to make such a decree. There is no pretence to say, that it is the doctrine of courts of equity to carry into specific execution every contract in all cases, where that is found to be the legal intention and effect of the contract between the parties. If, in any case, the parties have so dealt with each other in relation to the subject-matter of a contract, that the object of one party is defeated, while the other party is at liberty to do as he pleases, in relation to that very subject; or if, in fact, the character and condition of the property, to which the contract is attached, have been so altered, that the terms and restrictions of it are no longer applicable to the existing state of things; in such cases courts of equity will not grant any relief, but will leave the parties to their remedy at law.³ [Thus, no specific performance of a contract for real estate will be decreed, where the notes given therefor have not been paid, and the property has been sold for the payment of the consideration money; for he who seeks a specific performance must show an execution, or an offer to execute, on his part.⁴]

¹ *Howe v. Hunt*, 8 Jur. n. s. 834.

² *Samuda v. Lawford*, 8 Jur. n. s. 739.]

³ *Duke of Bedford v. British Museum*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 552, 567, 569, 571, 579; *post*, § 769, 770, 787; *Taylor v. Longworth*, 14 Peters. 173, 174.

⁴ *Boone v. Missouri Iron Co.*, 17 How. U. S. 340.

§ 750 a. Upon grounds still stronger, courts of equity will not proceed to decree a specific performance, where the contract is founded in fraud, imposition, mistake, undue advantage, or gross misapprehension; or where from a change of circumstances or otherwise, it would be unconscientious to enforce it.¹ But upon this topic we shall have occasion again to touch hereafter.²

§ 751. Where, indeed, a contract respecting real property is in its nature and circumstances unobjectionable, it is as much a matter of course for courts of equity to decree a specific performance of it, as it is for a court of law to give damages for the breach of it.³ And generally, it may be stated, that courts of equity will decree a specific performance, where the contract is in writing, and is certain, and is fair in all its parts, and is for an adequate consideration,⁴ and is capable of being performed,⁵ but not otherwise. The form of the instrument, by which the contract appears, is wholly unimportant. Thus, if the contract appears only in the condition of a bond, secured by a penalty, the court will act upon it as an agreement, and will not suffer the party to escape from a specific performance by offering to pay the penalty.⁶ On the other hand, if courts of equity refuse to interfere, they inflict no injury upon the plaintiff; for no decision is made, which affects his right to proceed at law for any redress by way of damages, to which he may be entitled. The whole effect of the dismissal of his suit is, that he is barred of any equitable relief.

§ 751 a. Courts of equity will also, in allowing or denying a specific performance, look not only to the nature of the transaction, but also to the character of the parties who have entered into

¹ *Bank of Alexandria v. Lynn*, 1 Peters, 376, 382; *Cathcart v. Robinson*, 5 Peters, 264; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 3, § 4, p. 125 to 135 (7th edit.); *Harnett v. Yielding*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 554, 555; *post*, § 769, 770.

² *Post*, § 769, 770, 770 a, 775.

³ *Hall v. Warren*, 9 Ves. 608; *Greenaway v. Adams*, 12 Ves. 395, 400; *King v. Hamilton*, 4 Peters, 311, 328. A specific performance will not be decreed upon a contract in favor of an infant, because the remedy is not mutual. *Flight v. Bolland*, 4 Russ. 298.

⁴ *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 4, § 2, p. 191 (7th edit.); *German v. Machin*, 6 Paige, 288.

⁵ *Denton v. Stewart*, 1 Cox, 258; *Greenaway v. Adams*, 12 Ves. 395, 400; *Cathcart v. Robinson*, 5 Peters, 264.

⁶ See *Logan v. Weinholt*, 7 Bligh, 1, 49, 50; *ante*, § 715; *Ensign v. Kellogg*, 4 Pick. 1; *Plunkett v. The Meth. E. S. in North Adams*, 3 Cush. 566.

the contract. Thus, if the purchase be made by trustees for the benefit of a *cestui que trust*, and there be a substantial misdescription of the premises, courts of equity will not enforce against them a specific performance with compensation, as being prejudicial to the *cestui que trust* and incapable of being ascertained.¹

§ 752. With these explanations in view, let us now proceed to examine, in the first place, in what cases a specific performance will be decreed of contracts respecting lands, where they are within the provisions of the statute of frauds and perjuries.² That statute,³ which has been generally re-enacted or adopted in America, declares, "That all interests in lands, tenements, and hereditaments, except leases for three years, not put in writing and signed by the parties or their agents authorized by writing, shall not have, nor be deemed in law or equity to have, any greater force or effect than leases on estates at will." It further enacts, "That no action shall be brought, whereby to charge any person upon any agreement made upon consideration of marriage, or upon any contract or sale of lands, tenements, or hereditaments, or any interest in or concerning the same, or upon any agreement, that is not to be performed within the space of one year from the making thereof, unless the agreement, upon which such action shall be brought, or some memorandum or note thereof shall be in writing, and signed by the party or his lawful agent." By the same statute, declarations of trust, created by the parties, are to be in writing; but trusts resulting by implication of law are to remain as they stood before the passing of the act.⁴

§ 753. The objects of this statute are such, as the very title indicates, to prevent the fraudulent setting up of pretended agreements, and then supporting them by perjury. But, besides these direct objects, there is a manifest policy in requiring all contracts of an important nature to be reduced to writing, since otherwise, from the imperfection of memory, and the honest mistakes of wit-

¹ *White v. Cudden*, 8 Clark & Fin. 766.

² Throughout this discussion, I have freely availed myself of Mr. Wooddeson's excellent Lecture upon the same subject. See 3 Wooddes. Lect. (Lect. 57) p. 420, &c. to p. 443; of Sir Edward Sugden's learned, *Treatise on Vendors and Purchasers*, Ch. 4, § 2, p. 99 to 120 (7th edit.); 1 Sugden on Vendors, ch. 4, § 3, p. 326 to 354 (10th edit.); of Mr. Newland on Contracts, ch. 10, and of the notes of Mr. Fonblanque. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 8, notes (a), (b), (c), (d), (e).

³ 29 Car. II. ch. 3.

⁴ Wooddes. Lect. 57, p. 420, 421.

nesses, it must often happen, either that the specific contract is incapable of exact proof, or that it is unintentionally varied from its precise original terms. So sensible were courts of equity of these mischiefs, that they constantly refused, before the statute to decree a specific performance of parol contracts, unless confessed by the party in his answer, or they are in part performed.¹

§ 754. It is obvious, that courts of equity are bound, as much

¹ Greenleaf on Evidence, § 262. See *Rondeau v. Wyatt*, 2 H. Bl. 68; *Child v. Comber*, 3 Swanst. 423, note; *Pembroke v. Thorpe*, 3 Swanst. 437, note. Sir Edward Sugden, in his learned Treatise on Vendors and Purchasers, ch. 4, § 2, p. 107, 108 (7th edit.), has reviewed the cases and stated the result. I shall give it in his own words. "There are four cases in Tothill, which arose previously to the statute of frauds, and appear to be applicable to the point under consideration; for equity, even before the statute of frauds, would not execute a mere parol agreement, not in part performed. In the first case (*Williams v. Neville*, Tothill, 135), which was heard in the 38th of Eliz., relief was denied, 'because it was but a preparation for an action upon the case.' In the two next cases (*Ferne v. Bullock*, Toth. 206, 208; *Clark v. Hackwell*, *ibid.*), which came on in the 9th of Jac. I., parol agreements were enforced, apparently on account of the payment of a very trifling part of the purchase-money; but the particular circumstances of these cases do not appear. The last case reported in Tothill (*Miller v. Blandist*, Toth. 85) was decided in the 30th of Jac. I., and the facts are distinctly stated. The bill was to be relieved concerning a promise to assure land of inheritance, of which there had not been any execution, but only 55s. paid in hand, and the bill was dismissed. This point received a similar determination in the next case on the subject before the statute, which is reported in 1 Chan., and was determined in the 15th of Ch. II. (*Simmons v. Cornelius*, 1 Chan. 128). So the same doctrine was adhered to in a case which occurred three years afterwards, and is reported in *Freeman* (Anon., 2 Freem. 128); for, although a parol agreement for a house, with 20s. paid, was decreed without further execution proved, yet it appears by the judgment, that the relief would not have been granted if the defendant, the vendor, had demurred to the bill, which he had neglected to do, but had proceeded to proof. The last case I have met with previously to the statute, was decided in the 21st of Car. II. (*Voll v. Smith*, 3 Chan. 16), and there a parol agreement, upon which only 20s. were paid, was carried into specific execution. This case probably turned, like the one immediately preceding it, on the neglect of the defendants to demur to the bill. It must be admitted, that the foregoing decisions are not easily reconcilable; yet, the result of them clearly is, that payment of a trifling part of the purchase-money was not a part-performance of a parol agreement. Whether payment of a considerable sum would have availed a purchaser, does not appear. In Toth. 67, a case is thus stated: '*Moyl v. Horne*, by reason 200l. was deposited towards payment, decreed.' This case may, perhaps, be deemed an authority, that, prior to the statute, the payment of a substantial part of the purchase-money would have enabled equity to specifically perform a parol agreement; but it certainly is too vague to be relied on." *Id.* p. 120.

as courts of law, by the provisions of this statute; and, therefore, they are not at liberty to disregard them. That they do, however, interfere in some cases within the reach of the statute, is equally certain. But they do so, not upon any notion of any right to dispense with it, but for the purpose of administering equities subservient to its true objects, or collateral to it, and independent of it.

§ 755. In the first place, then, courts of equity will enforce a specific performance of a contract within the statute, not in writing, where it is fully set forth in the bill, and is confessed by the answer of the defendant.¹ The reason given for this decision is, that the statute is designed to guard against fraud and perjury; and, in such a case, there can be no danger of that sort. The case, then, is taken entirely out of the mischief intended to be guarded against by the statute.² Perhaps another reason might fairly be added; and that is, that the agreement, although originally by parol, is now in part evidenced by writing under the signature of the party, which is a complete compliance with the terms of the statute. If such an agreement were originally by parol, but it was afterwards reduced to writing by the parties, no one would doubt its obligatory force.³ Indeed, if the defendant

¹ *Attorney General v. Sitwell*, 1 Younge & Coll. 583. In such a case, if the defendant should die before a decree, upon a bill of revivor against the heir, a specific performance by him would be decreed (*Attorney General v. Day*, 1 Ves. 221); for the principle goes throughout, and equally binds the representative as well as the ancestor (*ibid.*); *Lacon v. Mertins*, 3 Atk. 3; *ante*, § 740.

² *Attorney General v. Day*, 1 Ves. 221; *Croyston v. Baynes*, 1 Eq. Abridg. 19; s. c. *Prec. Ch.* 208; *Symondson v. Tweed*, *Prec. Ch.* 374; *Lacon v. Mertins*, 3 Atk. 3; *Child v. Godolphin*, 1 Dick. 39; s. c. cited 2 Bro. Ch. 564; *Gunter v. Halsey*, *Ambler*, 586; *Whitchurch v. Bevis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 566, 567; *Cottingham v. Fletcher*, 2 Atk. 155; *Spurrier v. Fitzgerald*, 6 Ves. 548, 555; *Gilb. Lex Prætor.* 237, 238; *Attorney General v. Sitwell*, 1 Younge & Coll. 583; *post*, § 770, 770 b.

³ Lord Bathurst, however, in *Eyre v. Popham* (Lofft, 808, 809), held that a parol agreement, not in part performed, could not be carried into execution, although confessed by the answer, saying that the court could not repeal the statute of frauds. See *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 4, § 2, p. 99 (7th edit.); *The London and Birmingham Railway Company v. Winter*, 1 Craig & Phillips, 57, 62. Lord Rosslyn, in *Rondeau v. Wyatt* (2 H. Bl. 68), speaking on the subject of the cases of parol agreements, confessed by the answer of the defendant, said: "It is said in these cases, and has been adopted in the argument, that when the defendant confesses the agreement, there is no danger of perjury, which was the only thing the statute intended to prevent. But this seems to be very bad rea-

does not insist on the defence, he may fairly be deemed to waive it; and the rule is, *Quisque renuntiare potest juri pro se introducto*.¹

§ 756. But where the answer confesses the parol agreement, and insists upon the statute of frauds as a defence, the question arises, whether courts of equity will allow the statute, under such circumstances, as a bar; or whether they will, notwithstanding the statute, decree a specific performance upon the ground of the confession. Upon this question, there has been no small conflict of judicial opinion. Lord Macclesfield expressly decreed a specific performance in such a case.² Lord Hardwicke appears to have entertained the same opinion; although, perhaps, he was not called upon finally to adjudicate it.³

§ 757. But later judges in equity have expressed a strong dissatisfaction with this opinion; and it may now be deemed to be entirely overruled, and the doctrine firmly established, that even where the answer confesses the parol agreement, if it insists, by

soning; for the calling upon a party to answer a parol agreement certainly lays him under a great temptation to commit perjury. But though the preventing perjury was one, it was not the sole object of the statute. Another object was to lay down a clear and positive rule, to determine when the contract of sale should be complete." This last reason has great force; but it is questionable, if the statute had in view so much the prevention of perjury in the party defendant, as the prevention of it in witnesses. There is always some temptation in the defendant to commit perjury in his answer, in all cases where his interest is concerned; nevertheless, he is required generally to answer, on oath, all facts charged in the bill. Mr. Fonblanque's note on this subject is very able and satisfactory. 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 8, note (d).

¹ Newland on Contracts, ch. 10, p. 201; *Rondeau v. Wyatt*, 2 H. Bl. 68; *Spurrier v. Fitzgerald*, 6 Ves. 548; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 8, note (d); *Flagg v. Mann*, 2 Sumner, 489, 528, 529.

² *Child v. Godolphin*, 1 Dick. 39; s. c. cited 2 Bro. Ch. 566; *Child v. Comber*, 3 Swanst. 423, note.

³ *Cottington v. Fletcher*, 2 Atk. 155, 156; *Lacon v. Mertins*, 3 Atk. 3. It is not quite certain that this was Lord Hardwicke's opinion. The case of *Cottington v. Fletcher* (2 Atk. 156) might, perhaps, have turned upon a point of pleading. But the dictum in *Lacon v. Mertins* (3 Atk. 3) seems direct. Lord Loughborough, in *Moore v. Edwards* (4 Ves. 24), said: "There is a case in *Atkyns*, that misleads people, where Lord Hardwicke is stated to have overruled the defence upon the statute, merely on the ground that the agreement was admitted. I had occasion to look into that; and it is a complete misstatement. It appears by Lord Hardwicke's own notes, that it was upon the agreement having been in *part* executed, that he determined the case." See also Sugden on Vendors, ch. 4, § 2, p. 100 (7th edit.); *Evans v. Harris*, 2 Ves. & Beam. 361; *Morrison v. Turnour*, 18 Ves. 175; *Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 265 to 268.

way of defence, upon the protection of the statute, the defence must prevail as a competent bar.¹ This doctrine seems conformable to the true intent and objects of the statute ; for it is difficult to perceive how a party can be legally bound by a contract, which the statute declares to be invalid, when the party insists upon the objection, and does not submit to waive it. It has been forcibly said by a great judge in equity, that it is immaterial what admissions are made by a defendant, who insists upon the benefit of the statute, for he throws it upon the plaintiff to show a complete written agreement ; and it can be no more thrown upon the defendant to supply defects in the agreement, than to supply the want of an agreement.² The same doctrine seems now fully recognized in America.³

§ 758. It follows from what has been already said, that, if the answer denies the existence of any parol contract, and insists upon the benefit of the statute, the case cannot be made out by parol evidence, and that the bar is complete. This would seem to be sufficiently clear upon principle. But the question having been at one time made, it is no longer a matter of mere principle, but it stands confirmed by the highest authority.⁴ A question, however,

¹ See Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 265 to 268 ; Sugden on Vendors, ch. 4, § 2, p. 98, 100, 101, 102 (7th edit.) ; 1 Sugden on Vendors, ch. 3, § 6, n. 10, p. 197 (10th edit.) ; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 439 ; Newland on Contr. ch. 10, p. 197 to 201 ; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 8, note (d) ; Thompson v. Todd, 1 Peters, Circuit, 380. Mr. Baron Eyre, in *Eyre v. Ivison*, and *Stewart v. Careless*, in 1785 (cited 2 Bro. Ch. 563, 564), and *Walters v. Morgan*, 2 Cox, 369, decided the point directly in favor of the bar of the statute under such circumstances. That also appears to have been the opinion of Lord Thurlow. *Whitbread v. Brockhurst*, 1 Bro. Ch. 416, and Mr. Belt's note ; and *Whitchurch v. Bevis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 559, 568, 569. Lord Rosslyn held the same opinion. *Rondeau v. Wyatt*, 2 H. Bl. 68 ; *Moore v. Edwards*, 4 Ves. 23 ; *Cooth v. Jackson*, 6 Ves. 17. So Lord Eldon in *Cooth v. Jackson*, 6 Ves. 37, and *Rowe v. Tweed*, 15 Ves. 375 ; and Sir William Grant, in *Blagden v. Bradbear*, 12 Ves. 466, 471.

² Sir William Grant, in *Blagden v. Bradbear*, 12 Ves. 471.

³ See *Thompson v. Todd*, 1 Peters, Circ. 388, and the cases cited by Mr. Ingraham, in his note to the American edition of Vesey, Jr., Vol. 3, p. 38 to 40.

⁴ *Whaley v. Bagenel*, 6 Bro. Parl. 45 ; s. c. cited 2 Bro. Ch. 567, 568 ; *Whitchurch v. Bevis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 567 ; s. c. 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. by Tomlins, 345 ; *Buckmaster v. Harrop*, 7 Ves. 347 ; *Botsford v. Burr*, 2 Johns. Ch. 408 ; *Bartlett v. Pickersgill*, 4 East, 577, note ; s. c. 1 Eden, 515 ; *Leman v. Whitley*, 4 Russ. 423 ; 2 Sugden on Vendors, p. 138 (9th edit.).

of a different sort, but connected with this subject, has also been much discussed, and that is, whether, to a bill for discovery and relief upon the ground of a parol agreement, the statute can be pleaded as a bar to the discovery of the fact of such agreement; or, in other words, whether the plea must not state, not only that there was no agreement in writing, but also that there was no such agreement by parol, as is charged in the bill. Upon this point some diversity of judicial opinion has also existed, and perhaps it is not now quite put at rest. But as this is rather a matter of pleading than of jurisdiction, it properly belongs to another place.¹

¹ See Mitf. Eq. Pl. by Jeremy, 265 to 268; Beames, Eq. Pl. 176 to 187; Cooper, Eq. Pl. 255, 256; Newl. on Contr. ch. 10, p. 201 to 204; Story on Eq. Pleadings, § 763, 766. See also note to 3 Ves. Jr. 38 (Amer. edit.). Mr. Fonblanque's note upon this point (1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 8, note d), as well as upon the preceding, is so valuable, that though long, it deserves to be cited at large in this place. "If a defendant" (says he) "confess the agreement charged in the bill, there is certainly no danger of fraud or perjury in decreeing the performance of such agreement. But it is of considerable importance to determine whether the defendant be bound to confess or deny a merely parol agreement, not alleged to be in any part executed; or, if he do confess it, whether he may not insist on the statute, in bar of the performance of it. The cases upon the first point are many in number, various in their circumstances, and the decisions upon them not immediately reconcilable. I shall therefore consider them in their principle rather than in detail. They who insist that the defendant is bound to confess or deny the agreement alleged, principally rely on the rule of equity, that the defendant is bound to confess or deny all facts which, if confessed, would give the plaintiff a claim or title to the relief prayed; and that, as equity would decree a parol agreement if confessed, the defendant must confess or deny it. It is certainly a general rule in equity, that the defendant shall discover whatever is material to the justice of the plaintiff's case; but in applying this rule to the case of a parol agreement, it is previously material to ascertain, whether the statute of frauds has not, in such case, relieved the defendant from this general obligation. The prevention of frauds and perjuries is the declared object of the statute; and the decreeing of a parol agreement, when confessed by the defendant, and the statute not insisted on, is evidently consistent with such object; *Nam quisque renuntiare potest juri pro se introducto*. But if the defendant be bound to confess or deny the parol agreement, his answer must be either liable to contradiction, or not liable to contradiction. If the defendant's answer be liable to contradiction by evidence aliunde, the evil arising from contradictory evidence, which the statute proposed to guard against, would necessarily result. If the defendant's answer be not liable to contradiction by evidence aliunde, the rule would furnish a temptation to perjury, by giving the defendant a certain interest in denying the agreement; since, if he confessed it, he would be bound to perform it. If the defendant be bound to confess or deny the parol

§ 759. In the next place, courts of equity will enforce a specific performance of a contract within the statute, where the parol

agreement insisted on by the plaintiff, one of the above consequences must necessarily ensue; which of the two is likely to prove the most mischievous were, perhaps, difficult to decide; for though the perjury which might take place, if contradictory evidence were allowed, is an evil of considerable size, yet the defendant's being liable to be contradicted, might operate as a check on his falsely denying that it was truly alleged. It seems, however, to have been the opinion of Lord-Chancellor Thurlow, that the only effect of the statute is to preclude the plaintiff from resorting to evidence aliunde for the purpose of substantiating a parol agreement denied by the defendant. *Whitchurch v. Bevis*, 2 Bro. 566. See also *Child v. Godolphin* (1 Dick. 39), therein cited by Lord-Chancellor Thurlow; *Cooth v. Jackson*, 6 Ves. 39. This rule, which, when the agreement is in no part performed, renders the defendant's answer conclusive, may certainly, in some instances, prevent fraud; but it is possible that in other instances it may encourage perjury. To strike out the mean, by which the spirit of the statute might be preserved without trenching on its provisions, is certainly difficult, perhaps impossible; for it is clear that the statute intended to prevent fraud, as well as perjury; and it cannot be denied, that the refusing to execute an agreement, deliberately and fairly entered into, merely because it was not reduced into writing, is a fraud which a court of conscience ought to discourage, but which it cannot discourage, if of such an agreement it cannot enforce a discovery. It would ill become me to pursue this point further; the difficulties which I have stated are probably sufficient to explain and justify the contrariety of opinion which has prevailed upon it. It remains, however, to consider, whether a defendant, having confessed the agreement alleged, can protect himself from the performance of it, by insisting on the statute? This, which is also *vezata questio*, is almost immediately dependent on the former point; for when Lord Macclesfield, in *Child v. Godolphin*, held, that the defendant was bound to confess or deny the agreement, it seems to have been a necessary consequence, that if the defendant confessed the agreement, he should not be allowed to avail himself of the statute, for if he might avail himself of the statute, *cui bono* compel him to confess or deny the agreement. See *Cottingham v. Fletcher*, 2 Atk. 155; *Lacon v. Mertins*, 3 Atk. 1. But see *Kingsman v. Kingsman*, cited in 10 Mod. 404. But if the defendant be not bound to confess or deny the agreement, it must be in respect of the statute affording him a good defence against the performance of it; and if such be the effect of the statute, it should seem to be immaterial, whether he set up such defence in the shape of a plea, or by his answer, the statute not having prescribed any mode in particular, by which a defendant must avail himself of such defence. See *Stewart v. Careless*, cited in *Whitchurch v. Bevis*. It may be material here to observe, that even the cases which most favor the opinion, that courts of equity may compel the performance, and, consequently, the discovery of merely parol agreements, require, that the terms of such agreement should be clear, definite, and conclusive; and, therefore, if the courts can collect the *ius deliberandi*, or *locus pœnitentiæ* to have been reserved, the contract shall not be considered as complete till reduced into writing, or in part performed.

agreement has been partly carried into execution.¹ The distinct ground, upon which courts of equity interfere in cases of this sort, is, that otherwise one party would be able to practise a fraud upon the other;² and it could never be the intention of the statute to enable any party to commit such a fraud with impunity. Indeed, fraud in all cases constitutes an answer to the most solemn acts and conveyances, and the objects of the statute are promoted, instead of being obstructed, by such a jurisdiction for discovery and relief.³ And where one party has executed his part of the agreement, in the confidence that the other party would do the same, it is obvious, that if the latter should refuse, it would be a fraud upon the former to suffer this refusal to work to his prejudice.⁴

§ 760. But the more difficult question is to ascertain what, in the sense of courts of equity, is to be deemed a part-performance, so as to extract the case from the reach of the statute. It seems formerly to have been thought, that a deposit, or security, or payment of the purchase-money, or of a part of it, or at least of a considerable part of it, was such a part-performance as took the case out of the statute.⁵ But that doctrine was open to much controversy and is now finally overthrown.⁶ Indeed, the distinc-

Whaley v. Bagenal, 6 Bro. P. C. 45; s. c. 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. 345 by Tomlins; *Whitchurch v. Bevis*, 2 Bro. 566; *Clarke v. Grant*, 14 Ves. 519; *Mortlock v. Buller*, 10 Ves. 311."

¹ *Gilb. Lex Prætoria*, p. 239, 240; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 3, § 8, and note (e).

² *Jacobs v. Peterborough and Shirley Railroad Co.*, 8 Cush. 225.

³ See *Attorney General v. Day*, 1 Ves. 221; *Walker v. Walker*, 2 Atk. 100; *Taylor v. Beech*, 1 Ves. 297; *Buckmaster v. Harrop*, 7 Ves. 346; *Whitbread v. Brockhurst*, 1 Bro. Ch. 417; s. c. 2 Ves. & B. 153, note; *Hawkins v. Holmes*, 1 P. Will. 770; *Wills v. Stradling*, 3 Ves. 378; *Morphett v. Jones*, 1 Swanst. 181; *Hare v. Shearwood*, 1 Ves. Jr. 242; *Clinan v. Cooke*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 41; Mr. Raithby's note to *Hollis v. Edwards*, 1 Vern. 159; *Newland on Contr.* ch. 10, p. 179, 180, 181, 182; *Mitford, Eq. Pl. by Jeremy*, 266; *Rathbun v. Rathbun*, 6 Barb. 98; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 3, § 8, notes (a), (b).

⁴ *Ibid.*; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 3, § 8, note (e); 3 *Wooddes. Lect. 57*, p. 483, 484; *Newland on Contr.* ch. 10, p. 179, 181 to 187.

⁵ *Hales v. Van Berchem*, 2 Vern. 618; *Owen v. Davies*, 1 Ves. 82; *Skett v. Whitmore*, 2 Freem. Ch. 281; *Lacon v. Mertins*, 3 Atk. 4; *Main v. Melbourn*, 4 Ves. 720, 724; *Clinan v. Cooke*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 40, note (a); 3 *Wooddes. Lect. 57*, p. 427.

⁶ *Clinan v. Cooke*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 40, 41; *O'Herlihy v. Hedges*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 129; *Jackson's Assignees v. Cutright*, 5 Munf. 318. I am aware that this may seem strong language. But the direct decisions and dicta in some cases in

tion taken in some of the cases, between the payment of a small part and the payment of a considerable part of the purchase-money seems quite too refined and subtle; for, independently of the difficulty of saying what shall be deemed a small, and what a considerable part of the purchase-money, each must, upon principle, stand upon the same reason; namely, that it is a part-performance in both cases or not in either.¹ One ground, why part-payment is not now deemed a part-performance, sufficient to take a case out of the statute, is, that the money can be recovered back again at law, and, therefore, the case admits of full and direct compensation.² This ground is not, however, quite satisfactory; for the party may become insolvent before the judgment at law can be executed.

former times (see 1 Freem. 486, Case 664 (b); *Leak v. Morrice*, 2 Ch. Cas. 135; *Alsopp v. Patten*, 1 Vern. 472; *Seagoood v. Meale*, Prec. Ch. 560; *Pengal v. Ross*, 2 Eq. Abr. 46, pl. 12), and the positive decision of Lord Redesdale on the point, in *Clinan v. Cooke*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 41, 42, seem to justify it. Mr. Sugden has collected all the authorities in an able manner, with a very clear commentary, in his Treatise on Vendors, ch. 3, § 3, p. 107 to 112 (7th edit.); 1 Sugden on Vendors, ch. 3, § 7, note 10, p. 202 (10th edit.), and holds the same opinion. Mr. Newland manifestly inclines to the same opinion. *Newland on Contr. ch. 10*, p. 187 to 191. There are also other modern cases, in which the contrary doctrine has been treated as doubtful. See *Buckmaster v. Harrop*, 7 Ves. 341, 346; *Coles v. Trecothick*, 9 Ves. 234, 240; *Frame v. Dawson*, 14 Ves. 388; *Ex parte Hooper*, 1 Meriv. 7, 8; s. c. 19 Ves. 479, 480; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 8, note (c); *Astor v. L'Amoreux*, 4 Sandf. 532.

¹ Mr. Sugden has made some striking remarks on this subject, in his Treatise on Vendors, ch. 3, § 3, p. 112 (7th edit.); 1 Sugden on Vendors, ch. 3, § 7, note 10, p. 209 (10th edit.), which deserves to be cited. "On this subject" (says he) "Sir William Grant's admirable judgment, in *Butcher v. Butcher*, must occur to every discerning mind. It turns on a subject so applicable to the present, that his argument, with a slight alteration, directly bears upon it. To say that a *considerable* share of the purchase-money must be given, is rather to raise a question, than to establish a rule. What is a considerable share, and what is a trifling sum? Is it to be judged of upon a mere statement of the sum paid, without reference to the amount of the purchase-money? If so, what is the sum that must be given to call for the interference of the court? What is the limit of amount at which it ceases to be trifling, and begins to be substantial? If it is to be considered with reference to the amount of the purchase-money, what is the proportion which ought to be paid? Mr. Booth also was impressed with this difficulty, although his sentiments are not so forcibly expressed. Where, he asks, will you strike the line? And who shall settle the quantum, that shall suffice in payment of part of any purchase-money, to draw the case out of the statute, or ascertain what shall be deemed so trifling as to leave the case within it?"

² *Ibid.*

Another ground has been stated, which certainly has more strength in it. It is, that the statute has said, in another clause (that which respects contracts for goods), that part-payment, by way of earnest, shall operate as a part-performance. And hence, the courts have considered this clause as excluding agreements for lands, because it is to be inferred, that, when the legislature said it should bind in the case of goods, and were silent as to the case of lands, they meant that it should not bind in the case of lands.¹

§ 761. But a more general ground, and that which ought to be the governing rule in cases of this sort, is, that nothing is to be considered as a part-performance, which does not put the party into a situation, which is a fraud upon him, unless the agreement is fully performed.² Thus, for instance, if upon a parol agreement a man is admitted into possession, he is made a trespasser, and is liable to answer as a trespasser, if there be no agreement valid in law or equity.³ Now, for the purpose of defending himself against a charge as a trespasser, and a suit to account for the profits in such a case, the evidence of a parol agreement would seem to be admissible for his protection; and if admissible for such a purpose, there seems no reason why it should not be admissible throughout.⁴ A case still more cogent might be put, where a vendee, upon a parol agreement for a sale of land, should proceed to build a house on the land, in the confidence of a due completion of the contract. In such a case, there would be a manifest fraud upon the party, in permitting the vendor to escape from a due and strict fulfilment of such agreement.⁵ Such a case is certainly distinguishable from that of part-payment of the purchase-money, for the latter may be repaid, and the parties are then just where they were before, especially if the money is repaid with interest. A man who has parted with his money is not in the situa-

¹ *Clinan v. Cooke*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 40, 41; *Pengall v. Ross*, 2 Eq. Abr. 46, pl. 12.

² *Id.*; *Savage v. Foster*, 9 Mod. 37 [* *Meach v. Perry*, 1 D. Chip. 182; *Gilbert v. The East Newark Co.*, 1 Beasley, Ch. 180].

³ See *Eaton v. Whitaker*, 18 Conn. 222; *Tilton v. Tilton*, 9 N. Hamp. 386; *Malins v. Brown*, 4 Comst. 403; *Pain v. Cooms*, 1 De G. & J. 34.

⁴ *Id.* and *Foxcroft v. Lister*, cited Prec. Ch. 519; Vern. 456; *Pengall v. Ross*. 2 Eq. Ab. 46, Pl. 12; *post*, § 763.

⁵ *Foxcroft v. Lister*, cited 2 Vern. 456; Prec. Ch. 519; *Wetmore v. White*, 1 Caines, Cas. Er. 87; *Parkhurst v. Van Cortlandt*, 14 Johns. 15.

tion of a man against whom an action may be brought, and who may otherwise suffer an irreparable injury.¹

§ 762. In order to make the acts such as a court of equity will deem part-performance of an agreement within the statute, it is essential that they should clearly appear to be done solely with a view to the agreement being performed. For, if they are acts which might have been done with other views, they will not take the case out of the statute, since they cannot properly be said to be done by way of part-performance of the agreement.² On this account, acts, merely introductory or ancillary to an agreement, are not considered as a part-performance thereof, although they should be attended with expense. Therefore, delivering an abstract of title, giving directions for conveyances, going to view the estate, fixing upon an appraiser to value stock, making valuations, admeasuring the lands, registering conveyances, and acts of the like nature, are not sufficient to take a case out of the statute.³ They are all preliminary proceedings, and are, besides, of an equivocal character, and capable of a double interpretation; whereas acts, to be deemed a part-performance, should be so clear, certain, and definite in their object and design, as to refer exclusively to a complete and perfect agreement, of which they are a part-execution.⁴

§ 763. In like manner the mere possession of the land contracted for will not be deemed a part-performance, if it be obtained wrongfully by the vendee, or if it be wholly independent of the contract. Thus, if the vendee enter into possession, not under the contract, but in violation of it, as a trespasser [or under a right derived otherwise than by the contract⁵], the case is not

¹ *Clinan v. Cooke*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 41, 42. See *Sutherland v. Briggs*, 1 Hare, 26.

² *Gunter v. Halsey*, Ambl. 586; s. c. 1 West, 681; *Lacon v. Mertins*, 3 Atk. 4; *Ex parte Hooper*, 19 Ves. 479; *Morphett v. Jones*, 1 Swanst. 181; *Phillips v. Thompson*, 1 Johns. Ch. 149; *Parkhurst v. Van Cortlandt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 283, 284, 285; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 8, note (c).

³ *Hawkins v. Holmes*, 1 P. Will. 770; *Pembroke v. Thorpe*, 3 Swanst. 437; *Clarke v. Wright*, 1 Atk. 12; *Whitbread v. Brockhurst*, 1 Bro. Ch. 412; *Whitchurch v. Bevis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 559, 566; *Redding v. Wilkes*, 3 Bro. Ch. 400; *Cooth v. Jackson*, 6 Ves. 17; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 3, § 3, p. 104 (7th edit.); *Stokes v. Moore*, 1 Cox, 219; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 8, note (c); *Newland on Contr.* ch. 10, p. 196, 197; *Frame v. Dawson*, 14 Ves. 386.

⁴ *Ibid.* *Jacobs v. Peterborough & Shirley Railroad*, 8 Cush. 224; *Shepherd v. Shepherd*, 1 Md. Ch. Dec. 244.

⁵ *Jacobs v. Peterborough and Shirley Railroad*, 8 Cush. 224.

taken out of the statute. So, if the vendee be a tenant in possession under the vendor; for his possession is properly referable to his tenancy, and not to the contract.¹ But if the possession be delivered and obtained solely under the contract; or if, in case of tenancy, the nature of the holding be different from the original tenancy, as by the payment of a higher rent, or by other unequivocal circumstances, referable solely and exclusively to the contract; there, the possession may take the case out of the statute. Especially will it be held to do so, where the party let into possession, has expended money in building or repairs, or other improvements; for under such circumstances, if the parol contract were to be deemed a nullity, he would be liable to be treated as a trespasser; and the expenditures would not only operate to his prejudice, but be the direct result of a fraud practised upon him.²

[* § 763 a. In a recent case,³ before the Court of Appeal in Chancery, it is suggested, by way of query, whether possession, taken previously, but continued after, a parol agreement, may not be such part-performance as to exclude a defence founded on the statute of frauds. This rule has been applied with justice, we think, to estoppels by deed, where the deed was accepted while the party was in possession of land, which would of itself have been a sufficient title as against the plaintiff, but for the deed, which to create the estoppel must be regarded as a merger of the former possessory title of the grantor.⁴ We see no reason why the *continuance* of possession under a contract may not be regarded as

¹ Cole v. White, cited 1 Bro. Ch. 409; Wills v. Stradling, 3 Ves. 378; Smith v. Turner, Prec. Ch. 561; Savage v. Carroll, 1 B. & Beatt. 265, 282; Frame v. Dawson, 14 Ves. 386; Lindsay v. Lynch, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 1; O'Reilly v. Thompson, 2 Cox, 271; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 8, note (e); Morphet v. Jones, 1 Swanst. 181; Sugden on Vendors, ch. 3, § 3, p. 104, 105 (7th edit.); 1 Sugden on Vendors, ch. 3, § 7, n. 5 and 6, p. 200, 201 (10th edit.); 3 Wooddes. Lect. 57, p. 424 to 426.

² Butcher v. Staples, 1 Vern. 363; Pike v. Williams, 2 Vern. 455; Lockey v. Lockey, Prec. Ch. 518; Earl of Aylesford's case, 2 Str. 783; Binstead v. Colman, Bunb. 65; Lacon v. Mertins, 3 Atk. 1; Wills v. Stradling, 3 Ves. 378; Kine v. Balfie, 2 B. & Beatt. 348; Denton v. Stewart, 1 Cox, 258; Gregory v. Mighell, 18 Ves. 328; Morphet v. Jones, 1 Swanst. 172; Sugden on Vendors, ch. 3, § 3, p. 104, 105 (7th edit.); 1 Sug. on Vend. ch. 3, § 7, n. 5 and 6, p. 200, 201 (10th edit.); 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 8, note (e); id. § 9; ante, § 761.

³ [* Pain v. Coombs, 1 De Gex & J. 34, 46.

⁴ Brooks v. Chaplin, 3 Vt. 281.]

much part-performance as the taking possession under the contract. Where substantial improvements are subsequently made, in faith of the contract, there could be no question, it should be regarded as part-performance.]

§ 764. But, in order to take a case out of the statute, upon the ground of part-performance of a parol contract, it is not only indispensable that the acts done should be clear and definite, and referable exclusively, to the contract; but the contract should also be established by competent proofs to be clear, definite, and unequivocal in all its terms.¹ If the terms are uncertain, or ambiguous, or not made out by satisfactory proofs, a specific performance will not (as, indeed, upon principle it should not) be decreed.² The reason would seem obvious enough; for a court of equity ought not to act upon conjecture; and one of the most important objects of the statute was, to prevent the introduction of loose and indeterminate proofs of what ought to be established by solemn written contracts.³ Yet it is certain, that, in former times, very able judges felt themselves at liberty to depart from such a reasonable course of adjudication, and granted relief, notwithstanding the uncertainty of the terms of the contract. In other words, the court framed a contract for the parties, *ex æquo et bono*, where it found none.⁴ Such a latitude of jurisdiction seems unwarrantable upon any sound principle; and, accordingly, it has been expressly renounced in more recent times.⁵ It may, perhaps, be true, that, in such cases of part-performance, the court will not be deterred from making an inquiry, before a master, into the terms of the contract, by the mere fact that all the terms are not sufficiently before the court to enable it to make a final decree.⁶

¹ See *Charnley v. Hansbury*, 1 Harris, 16.

² *Waters v. Howard*, 8 Gill, 277.

³ *Owins v. Baldwin*, 1 Md. Ch. Dec. 123.

⁴ *Anon.*, 5 Vin. Abr. 523, Pl. 40; *id.* 522, Pl. 38; *Anon.*, cited 6 Ves. 470; *Allan v. Bower*, 3 Bro. Ch. 149.

⁵ See *Boardman v. Mostyn*, 6 Mes. 467, 470; *Clinan v. Cooke*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 22, 40; *Symondson v. Tweed*, Prec. Ch. 374; *Forster v. Hale*, 3 Ves. 712, 713; *Savage v. Carroll*, 1 B. & Beatt. 265, 551; s. c. 2 B. & Beatt. 451; *Toole v. Medicott*, 1 B. & Beatt. 404; *Phillips v. Thompson*, 1 Johns. Ch. 149, 150; *Parkhurst v. Van Cortlandt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 283 to 286; *Beard v. Linthicum*, 1 Md. Ch. Dec. 348; *Lindsay v. Lynch*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 6.

⁶ *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 3, § 3, p. 114 to 118 (7th edit.); 1 *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 3, § 7, n. 19 to 32, p. 210 to 216 (10th edit.); *Allan v. Bower*, 3 Bro. Ch. 149, and Mr. Belt's notes, p. 151, notes (2), (3); 1 Sch. & Lefr. 33, 36,

But if such an inquiry should end in leaving the contract uncertain, so that the court cannot say what its precise import and limitations are; then the court will withhold a final decree for a specific performance.¹

§ 765. It must be admitted that the exceptions, thus allowed, do greatly trench upon the policy and objects of the statute of frauds; and, perhaps, there might have been as much wisdom originally in leaving the statute to its full operation, without any attempt to create exceptions, even in cases where the statute would enable the party to protect himself from a performance of his contract through a meditated fraud. For, even admitting that such cases might occur, they would become more and more rare as the statute became better understood; and a partial evil ought not to be permitted to control a general convenience. And, indeed, it is far from being certain that these very exceptions do not assist parties in fraudulent contrivances, and increase the temptations to perjury, quite as often as they do assist them in the promotion of good faith and the furtherance of justice. These exceptions have also led to great embarrassments in the actual administration of equity; and although in some cases one may clearly see that no great mischiefs can occur from enforcing them; yet in others, difficulties may be stated in their practical application, which compel us to pause, and to question their original propriety.²

87; *Harnett v. Yielding*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 555; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 7, note (x). I have used this language rather in deference to Sir Edward Sugden's opinion (*Sugden on Vendors, ubi supra*), than because I am entirely satisfied that the authorities bear out the position. Lord Manners's remarks on the subject present the contrary doctrine in a forcible manner; and his comments on the authorities are important; *Savage v. Carroll*, 2 B. & Beatt. 451 to 453; Mr. Chancellor Kent agrees with Lord Manners; *Parkhurst v. Van Cortlandt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 283 to 286.

¹ *Colson v. Thompson*, 2 Wheaton, 336, 341. And see cases cited in note (b); *Lindsay v. Lynch*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 7, 8; *Parkhurst v. Van Cortlandt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 283 to 286; *Harnett v. Yielding*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 555; *Newland on Contr.* ch. 8, p. 151; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, 441.

² See 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 8, note (e). Mr. Fonblanque's able note on this subject is full of important instruction on this head. I know not where the objections are so thoroughly sifted. "To allow a statute," says he, "having the prevention of frauds for its object, to be interposed in bar of the performance of a parol agreement, in part performed, were evidently to encourage one of the mischiefs which the legislature intended to prevent. It is therefore an established rule, that a parol agreement, in part performed, is not within the provisions of the

§ 766. Considerations of this sort have led eminent judges to declare that they would not carry the exceptions of cases from the statute. See *Whitchurch v. Bevis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 566. This exception, however, leads to considerable difficulties. Part-performance is clearly a relative term; and in stating acts of part-performance, the plaintiff must necessarily state the agreement to which he refers. The defendant, by the above rule, seems bound to consider the case stated as out of the statute. Supposing him, however, to deny the acts alleged to have been done in part-performance, would he be bound to admit or deny the parol agreement referred to? Or, admitting such acts to have been done, supposing him to deny the agreement, or the terms of the agreement, to which such acts are referred in part-performance, would the plaintiff, in the latter case, be at liberty to resort to evidence *aliunde*, in order to substantiate such parol agreement? In the first case, I conceive that the plaintiff would be entitled to go into evidence, to show that the acts alleged were actually done; and if he succeed in this particular, it seems to follow, as a necessary consequence, that he might prove the agreement, to which such acts referred. But, suppose the plaintiff not to be able to prove the agreement, the terms of it being confined to his and the defendant's knowledge, would he be entitled to a discovery from the defendant? If the defendant be bound to discover such agreement, merely because the plaintiff had alleged it to have been in part performed, the plaintiff might, by alleging what was false, be placed in a better situation than he would have been in if he had stated the truth. But it would be difficult, in a court of conscience, to maintain that falsehood can entitle to such an advantage. For the purpose of investigating the point, I will, however, assume, agreeably to the decision in the *Earl of Aylesford's* case, 2 Stra. 783, and the opinion of Lord Thurlow, in *Whitchurch v. Bevis*, that the defendant is bound to discover whether he entered into such parol agreement or not. Suppose the defendant to have confessed the agreement, denying, however, the acts alleged in part-performance of it. Where the plaintiff alleges part-performance, it is assumed, that the defendant cannot plead the statute; and when the statute cannot be pleaded, it should seem that it cannot be insisted upon by the answer. But where the statute is not insisted on, it seems admitted that a parol agreement confessed shall be decreed to be performed. It would follow, in the above supposed case, that the plaintiff would be relieved from the necessity of proving the acts alleged in part-performance; for *cui bono* put him upon proving the part-performance of an agreement confessed, the admission of the agreement being alone a sufficient circumstance to entitle him to a decree. This advantage might encourage the plaintiff untruly to allege a part-performance. But I know no means by which the objection can be obviated; for if the agreement be in part performed, it is but reasonable that it should be completed, and to that the defendant's discovery may be material; and whether it was or was not in part performed, is a point which clearly the defendant may establish by evidence *aliunde*. I have adverted to another difficulty which may arise from the rule, that an agreement in part performed is not within the statute of frauds. The case I stated, supposes the defendant to admit certain acts to have been done; but denies that they were done in part-performance of an agreement; or insists that the terms of the agreement, of which they were done in part-performance, were not such as stated in

statute of frauds farther than they were compelled to do by former decisions.¹ Lord Redesdale has strongly said, "The statute was made for the purpose of preventing perjuries and frauds, and nothing can be more manifest to any person who has been in the habit of practising in courts of equity, than that the relaxation of that statute has been a ground of much perjury and much fraud. If the statute had been rigorously observed, the result would probably have been, that few instances of parol agreements would

the bill. But see *Moore v. Edwards*, 4 Ves. 22; *Cooth v. Jackson*, 6 Ves. 27, in which the above reasoning is very fully considered. There are various acts, which are considered to amount to a part-performance of a parol agreement, and some of them are of a nature which necessarily implies some agreement; as, where a man is let into possession, the possession must be referred to some title. But to what can it, unless to the agreement of one having the right to confer the title? In such a case, it might be consistent with the provisions of the statute to allow evidence to explain the agreement, which led to the possession, though the defendant denied that there was any agreement upon the subject. But if the act alleged in part-performance be of a more doubtful nature, as retaining possession after the expiration of a lease; in such case, if the defendant denied having agreed to grant a new lease, or to grant it on the terms alleged, it seems very difficult to determine whether the plaintiff ought or ought not, in respect of the admission of the acts alleged, to be allowed to prove a parol agreement by evidence *aliunde*. See *Mortimer v. Orchard*, 2 Ves. Jr. 243. This note is already drawn out to a greater length than I intended; and as the difficulties which I feel may have been judicially removed by the late decisions of the court, I shall close it with a few distinctions upon the questions, what acts amount to a part-performance. The general rule is, that the acts must be such as could be done with no other view or design than to perform the agreement, and not such as are merely introductory or ancillary to it. *Gunter v. Halsey*, Ambl. 586; *Whitbread v. Brockhurst*, 1 Bro. 412. See *Wills v. Stradling*, 3 Ves. Jr. 379; *Pym v. Blackburn*, 3 Ves. Jr. 34. The giving of possession is therefore to be considered as an act of part-performance. *Stewart v. Denton*, MS. 4th July, 1786. But giving directions for conveyances, and going to view the estate, are not. *Clerk v. Wright*, 1 Atk. 12; *Whaley v. Bagnel*, 6 Bro. P. C. 45; s. c. 1 Bro. Parl. Cas. by Tomlins, 345. Payment of money is also said to be an act of part-performance; *Lacon v. Mertins*, 3 Atk. 4; *sed qu.* But it is said that payment of money is not a part-performance. See *Clinan v. Cooke*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 40; *Frame v. Dawson*, 14 Ves. 388. Query, whether it means payment of the whole, or only a part of the purchase-money? See also *O'Reilly v. Thompson*, 2 Cox, 272. That payment of a sum, by way of earnest, is not. *Seagood v. Meale*, Prec. Ch. 560; *Lord Pengall v. Ross*, 2 Eq. Cas. Abr. 46, pl. 12; *Simmons v. Cornelius*, 1 Ch. 128. But see *Voll v. Smith*, 3 Ch. 16; and *Anon.*, 2 Freem. 128." See *Givens v. Calder*, 2 Desaus. Ch. 171; *Davenport v. Mason*, 15 Mass. 93; *Niven v. Belknap*, 2 Johns. 587.

¹ *Cooth v. Jackson*, 6 Ves. 22, 27; *Lindsay v. Lynch*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 5.

have occurred. Agreements would, from the necessity of the case, have been reduced to writing. Whereas, it is manifest, that the decisions on the subject have opened a new door to fraud; and that, under pretence of part-execution, if possession is had in any way whatsoever, means are frequently found to put a court of equity in such a situation, that, without departing from its rules, it feels itself obliged to break through the statute. And I remember, it was mentioned in one case, in argument, as a common expression at the bar, that it had become a practice *to improve gentlemen out of their estates*. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary for courts of equity to make a stand, and not carry the decisions farther.”¹

§ 767. We have already had occasion to see that parol agreements, even with part-performance, will not be decreed to be specifically executed unless the whole terms of the contract are clear and definitely ascertained. The same rule applies to cases of written contracts.² If they are not certain in themselves, so as to enable the court to arrive at the clear result of what all the terms are, they will not be specifically enforced. In the first place, it would be inequitable to carry a contract into effect, where the court is left to ascertain the intentions of the parties, by mere

¹ *Lindsay v. Lynch*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 4, 5, 7. See also *Harnett v. Yielding*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 549; *O'Reilly v. Thompson*, 2 Cox, 271, 273; *Shepherd v. Shepherd*, 1 Md. Ch. Dec. 247; *Forster v. Hale*, 3 Ves. 712, 713; *Phillips v. Thompson*, 1 Johns. Ch. 149; *Parkhurst v. Van Cortlandt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 284, 285. Lord Alvanley's remarks, in *Forster v. Hale*, 3 Ves. 712, 713, are striking. “I admit,” said he, “my opinion is, that the court has gone rather too far in permitting part-performance and other circumstances to take cases out of the statute, and then, unavoidably perhaps, after establishing the agreement, to admit parol evidence of the contents of that agreement. As to part-performance, it might be evidence of some agreement; but of what, must be left to parol evidence. I always thought the court went a great way. They ought not to have held it evidence of an unknown agreement, but to have had the money laid out repaid. It ought to have been a compensation. Those cases are very dissatisfactory. It was very right to say, the statute should not be an engine of fraud; therefore, compensation would have been very proper. They have, however, gone farther; saying, it was clear there was some agreement, and letting them prove it. But how does the circumstance of a man having laid out a great deal of money prove that he is to have a lease for 99 years? The common sense of the thing would have been to have let them bring an action for the money. I should pause upon such a case.”

² *Ante*, § 751, 764; *Kendall v. Almy*, 2 Sumner, 278; *Smith v. Burnham*, 3 Sumner, 435.

conjecture or guess ; for it might be guilty of the error of decreeing precisely what the parties never did intend or contemplate.¹ In the next place, if any terms are to be supplied, it must be by parol evidence ; and the admission of such evidence would let in all the mischief intended to be guarded against by the statute. Indeed, it would be inconsistent with the general principles of evidence (although there are exceptions)² which are administered in courts of equity, as well as in courts of law ; for the general rule in both courts is, that parol evidence is not admissible to vary, annul, or explain a written contract.³ A contract cannot rest partly in writing and partly in parol. The writing is the highest evidence, and does away the necessity and effect of the parol evidence, if it is contradictory to it.⁴

§ 768. Another exception to the statute, turning upon similar considerations, is, where the agreement is intended by the parties to be reduced to writing, according to the statute ; but it is prevented from being done by the fraud of one of the parties.⁵ In such a case, courts of equity have said that the agreement shall

¹ *Lindsay v. Lynch*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 7, 8 ; *Colson v. Thompson*, 2 Wheat. 336, 341 ; *Harnett v. Yielding*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 555 ; *Kendall v. Almy*, 2 Sumner, 278 ; *Holloway v. Headington*, 8 Simons, 324 ; *Waters v. Howard*, 8 Gill, 277. See *Moorhouse v. Colvin*, 9 Eng. Law & Eq. 136.

² Some of these exceptions have been already considered under the heads of *Accident*, *Mistake*, and *Fraud* ; but the full examination of the subject belongs to a treatise on Evidence. See 3 Starkie on Evidence, title *Parol Evidence* ; and Sugden on Vendors, ch. 3, § 3, 4, p. 97 to 146 (7th edit.) ; 1 Sugden on Vendors, ch. 3, § 3, n. 8 to 31, p. 163 to 171 (10th edit.) ; id. ch. 3, § 8, n. 1 to 28, p. 217 to 231 ; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 11, note (o). For a similar reason, I have omitted all notice of what are the proper proofs of a written agreement, the signature of the party, &c., within the statute of frauds ; and, indeed, every thing respecting the construction of the statute, which does not directly touch the jurisdiction in equity. See *Squire v. Campbell*, 1 Mylne & Craig, 480.

³ 3 Starkie on Evid. Pt. 4, p. 995 to 1015 ; *Parteriche v. Powlet*, 2 Atk. 383 ; *Tinney v. Tinney*, 3 Atk. 8 ; *Lawson v. Laude*, 1 Dick. 346 ; *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 328 ; *Rich v. Jackson* in note, 6 Ves. 334, note (c) ; *Woollam v. Hearn*, 7 Ves. 211 ; *Clinan v. Cooke*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 33 to 39 ; Sugden on Vendors, ch. 3, § 4, p. 123 to 134 (7th edit.) ; *Parkhurst v. Van Cortlandt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 283, 284 ; s. c. 14 Johns. 15 ; *Squire v. Campbell*, 1 Mylne & Craig, 480 ; *Carr v. Duval*, 14 Peters, 77.

⁴ *Parkhurst v. Van Cortlandt*, 1 Johns. Ch. 283 ; s. c. 14 Johns. 15 ; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 57, p. 436, 437.

⁵ See Newl. on Contr. ch. 10, p. 179 to 197.

be specifically executed, for otherwise, the statute, designed to suppress fraud, would be the greatest protection to it.¹ Thus, if one agreement in writing should be proposed and drawn, and another should be fraudulently and secretly brought in and executed in lieu of the former, in this and the like cases equity would relieve.² So, if instructions are given by an intended husband to prepare a marriage settlement, and he promises to have the settlement reduced to writing, and then fraudulently and secretly prevents it from being done, and the marriage takes effect, in consequence of false assurances and contrivances, a specific performance will be decreed.³ But, if there has been no fraud, and no agreement to reduce the settlement to writing; but the other party has placed reliance solely upon the honor, word, or promise of the husband, no relief will be granted; ⁴ for, in such a case the party chooses to rest upon a parol agreement, and must take the consequences.⁵ And the subsequent marriage is not deemed a part-performance, taking the case out of the statute, contrary to the rule which prevails in other cases of contract. In this respect it is always treated as a peculiar case standing on its own grounds.⁶ So, if a man should treat for a loan of money on mortgage, and the conveyance is to be by an absolute deed of the mortgagor, and a defeasance by the mortgagee; and, after the absolute deed is executed, the mortgagee fraudulently refuses to execute the defeasance, equity will decree a specific performance.⁷ So, where a

¹ *Montacute v. Maxwell*, 1 P. Will. 618; s. c. 1 Eq. Abr. 19; Prec. Ch. 526.

² *Ibid.*; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 57, p. 432; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 11, note (o).

³ *Ibid.* See *ante*, § 331, 374, note; *Taylor v. Beech*, 1 Ves. 297, 298; *Newl. on Contr.* ch. 10, p. 191, 192, 194; *Redding v. Wilkes*, 3 Bro. Ch. 400; *Dundas v. Dutens*, 1 Ves. Jr. 196, 199; s. c. 2 Cox, 234; *Gilb. Lex Prætor.* 243, 244; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 432, &c.

⁴ *Ibid.* But see *ante*, § 374, note.

⁵ It has sometimes been attempted to except from the statute cases where the parties have expressly agreed that their contract should be reduced to writing. But this doctrine, except in cases of fraud, has been expressly denied. *Hollis v. Whiteing*, 1 Vern. 151, 159; *Whitchurch v. Bevis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 565.

⁶ See *Taylor v. Beech*, 1 Ves. 297, 298; *Dundas v. Dutens*, 1 Ves. Jr. 195, 199; s. c. 2 Cox, 233; *Redding v. Wilkes*, 3 Bro. Ch. 400, 401.

⁷ *Maxwell v. Montacute*, Prec. Ch. 526; *Walker v. Walker*, 2 Atk. 99; *Young v. Peachy*, 2 Atk. 258; *Joynes v. Statham*, 3 Atk. 389; *Oldham v. Litchford*, 2 Freem. 284, 285; *Skett v. Whitmore*, 2 Freem. 281; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 57, p. 429.

father had purchased lands in fee, and on his death-bed told his eldest son, that the lands were purchased with his second son's money, and that he intended to give them to him, and the eldest son promised that he should enjoy them accordingly, and the father died, and the eldest son refused to comply with his promise; it was held that the promise should be specifically performed, upon the ground of fraud, notwithstanding the objection that there ought to have been a declaration of the use or trust, under the statute.¹ Other cases of a like character have occurred under the head of fraud, and similar considerations may apply in cases of accident and mistake, clearly and incontrovertibly made out.²

§ 769. And, here, it is important to take notice of a distinction between the case of a plaintiff seeking a specific performance in equity, and the case of a defendant, resisting such a performance. We have already seen, that the specific execution of a contract in equity is a matter, not of absolute right in the party, but of sound discretion in the court.³ Hence, it requires a much less strength of case on the part of the defendant to resist a bill to perform a contract, than it does on the part of the plaintiff to maintain a bill to enforce a specific performance.⁴ When the court simply refuses to enforce the specific performance of a contract, it leaves the party to his remedy at law.⁵ An agreement, to be entitled to be carried into specific performance, ought (as we have seen) to be certain, fair, and just in all its parts.⁶ Courts of

¹ *Sellack v. Harris*, 5 Vin. Abridg. 521, pl. 31; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 57, p. 438; *ante*, § 256; *Podmore v. Gunning*, 7 Sim. 644; *post*, § 1265.

² See *ante*, under the heads of *Accident*, *Mistake*, and *Fraud*, § 99, 182, 206, 256, 386; Newl. on Contr. ch. 10, p. 179 to 181; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 57, p. 436 to 438; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 3, § 3, p. 103, § 4, 154, 155 (7th edit.); 1 *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 3, § 8, n. 20 to 28, p. 225 to 231 (10th edit.); *id.* § 11, n. 1 to 27, p. 258 to 271; *Irnham v. Child*, 1 Bro. Ch. Cas. 92; *Pym v. Blackburn*, 3 Ves. 38, note (a), (Amer. edit.); *Pember v. Mathers*, 1 Bro. Ch. 54; *Whitchurch v. Bevis*, 2 Bro. Ch. 565. See *Attorney General v. Sitwell*, 1 Younge & Coll. 583; *Attorney General v. Jackson*, 5 Hare, 355.

³ *Ante*, § 742.

⁴ *Vigers v. Pike*, 8 Clark & Fin. 562, 645, and Lord Cottenham's remarks, p. 645. *Tyson v. Watts*, 1 Md. Ch. Dec. 15.

⁵ *Vigers v. Pike*, 8 Clark & Fin. 562, 645. In this respect it differs greatly from the case of an executed contract; for if a court of equity should refuse to administer equities founded upon a deed executed, it would leave the party applying without a remedy. *Ibid.*

⁶ *Buxton v. Lister*, 3 Atk. 385; *Brashier v. Gratz*, 6 Wheaton, 528; *Hart-*

equity will not decree a specific performance in cases of fraud or mistake;¹ or of hard and unconscionable bargains;² or where the decree would produce injustice;³ or where it would compel the party to an illegal or immoral act; or where it would be against public policy; or where it would involve a breach of trust; or where a performance has become impossible; and, generally, not in any cases where such a decree would be inequitable under all the circumstances.⁴

[* § 769 *a*. A very curious case was recently decided, in the Court of Appeal, by the Lord-Chancellor Chelmsford, and the Lords Justices, in a suit for specific performance. A vendor insisted on executing the purchase-deed, without the purchaser or any agent on his behalf being present; and also insisted on the purchase-money being paid, not to himself, but to his solicitor, or his clerk, to neither of whom had he given any written authority to receive it. On the purchaser declining to complete the purchase in that mode, the vendor brought an action for the purchase-money. In giving judgment, the court characterized the conduct of the vendor as frivolous, insulting, and suspicious; and held that he ought to pay all the costs, both at law and in equity; and gave him, for the benefit of others in similar temptation, a very

nett v. Yielding, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 554; *Ellard v. Landaff*, 1 B. & Beatt. 250; *Seymour v. Delancey*, 6 Johns. Ch. 222; *ante*, § 693, 792, 750, 751, 767; *Kendall v. Almy*, 2 Sumner, 278. [* See also *Drysdale v. Mace*, 5 De G., M. & G. 103.]

¹ See *Western Railroad Corporation v. Babcock*, 6 Met. 346.

² *Gasgal v. Small*, 2 Strobb. Eq. 72.

³ *Webb v. Alton Mar. & Fire Ins. Co.*, 5 Gilman, 223.

⁴ *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 3, § 4, p. 125 to 135 (7th edit.); 1 *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 3, § 8, n. 18 to 28, p. 224 to 231 (10th edit.); *id.* ch. 4, § 3, n. 29 to 42, p. 337 to 343; *id.* § 5, n. 3 to 15, p. 381 to 386; *King v. Hamilton* 4 Peters, 311; *ante*, § 650; *Kimberley v. Jennings*, 6 Sim. 340; *Harnett v. Yielding*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 554, 555; *Jeremy on Equity Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 432, &c.; *Greenaway v. Adams*, 13 Ves. 399, 400; *Denton v. Stuart*, 1 Cox, 258; *Cathcart v. Robinson*, 5 Peters, 264; *Mechanics' Bank of Alexandria v. Lynn*, 1 Peters, 376; *ante*, § 750 *a*, 751. We have already seen, that Mr. Baron Alderson, in *Attorney General v. Sitwell*, 1 Younge & Coll. 582, 583, expressed a strong opinion against a court of equity's undertaking, first, upon the ground of mistake to reform a contract, and then decreeing a specific performance of it. *Ante*, § 161, note (1), p. 175; *ante*, § 207, 769; *post*, § 787. [* See also *Howard v. Edgell*, 17 Vt. 9; *Powers v. Hale*, 5 Foster, 145; *Davidson v. Little*, 22 Penn. St. 245; *Viele v. Troy & B. Railw.* 21 Barb. 381.]

salutary admonition not to attempt to be too curious in the detail of common matters, but take the common course. They say these matters are to be regulated by reason and courtesy.¹ It has been decided, that in the absence of any express stipulation, the expenses and outgoings of property, such as the repairs and renewals of premises, and machinery, in the case of mills, when sold, must be borne by the vendors, down to the time when the purchaser could prudently take possession; i.e., when good title was shown.² The validity of a leasehold title depended on the lessor's assent to the assignment. The assent was not given until after suit by the vendor. It was held that the vendor must bear the rent, rates, taxes, and outgoings, down to the date of the assent, and that the purchaser must pay interest from that time. A purchaser who had altogether denied the vendor's right to specific performance, ordered to pay the costs of suit, instituted by the vendor for that purpose, down to the hearing, although the title was not finally completed until after the decree.³ But where in the terms of the agreement there is a provision for compensation in case of mistake or error in the particulars, the fact of such mistake or error occurring is no sufficient ground for denying specific performance.⁴ So, also, where the property has diminished in value, or has been deteriorated by permissive waste, and the completion of the purchase in the mean time has been delayed by the vendor in possession, the purchaser is entitled to compensation.⁵ Objections to the abstract of title furnished must be made in a reasonable time, or they will be considered as waived.⁶ And where the defendant agreed to purchase the property on the valuation of a person named, the court decreed specific performance, although it considered the valuation very high "and perhaps exorbitant," there appearing neither "fraud, mistake, or miscarriage."⁷ And where a vendor reserves the right of rescinding, in the event of the purchaser objecting to "the title, conveyance, or otherwise, and should insist thereon," it was held that this was not a mere arbitrary power of rescission upon the objection being made, but

¹ [* *Viney v. Chaplin*, 2 De G. & J. 468.

² *Carrodus v. Sharp*, 20 Beavan, 56.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Hoy v. Smythies*, 22 Beavan, 510.

⁵ *Regent's Canal Co. v. Ware*, 23 Beavan, 575.

⁶ *Bown v. Stenson*, 24 Beavan, 631.

⁷ *Collier v. Mason*, 25 Beavan, 200.

that he must answer the objection if he could, and wait to see whether the purchaser would insist.¹ Specific performance will not be decreed after considerable lapse of time.²]

§ 769 *b*. It sometimes happens that a contract involving the sale and conveyance of land becomes impossible by reason of the title proving defective, and at the same time the vendee may have taken possession, and insist upon strict performance on the part of the vendor and also declined to surrender possession on the ground of not being in fault. This subject is largely discussed and in a very interesting manner, by the Master of the Rolls. In a late case,³ his lordship here came to the conclusion that such a contract must be treated the same as if never made, as to any act of possession under it or specific performance, leaving the party to any redress he might have for damages in an action at law. In the case before the court, a suit had been agreed to be compromised on the ground of selling the estate in controversy and dividing the proceeds between the parties in a stipulated proportion. The court held the compromise had failed, by reason of the defect of title, and that the party was entitled to prosecute the suit.

§ 770. But courts of equity do not stop here; for they will let in the defendant to defend himself, by evidence to resist a decree, where the plaintiff would not always be permitted to establish his case by the like evidence. Thus, for instance, courts of equity will allow the defendant to show, that, by fraud, accident, or mistake, the thing bought is different from what he intended;⁴ or that material terms have been omitted in the written agreement; or that there has been a variation of it by parol; or that there has been a parol discharge of a written contract.⁵ The ground of this

¹ Greaves *v.* Wilson, 25 Beavan, 290. See also Gedye *v.* The Duke of Montrose, 26 Beavan, 45.

² Alloway *v.* Braine, 26 Beavan, 575.]

³ Mullins *v.* Hussey, 12 Jur. N. S. 636.

⁴ Malins *v.* Freeman, 2 Keen, 25, 34.

⁵ Joynes *v.* Statham, 3 Atk. 388; Woollam *v.* Hearn, 7 Ves. 211; Townshend *v.* Stangroom, 6 Ves. 328; Clarke *v.* Grant, 14 Ves. 519; 15 Ves. 523; Winch *v.* Winchester, 1 Ves. & Beam. 375; Price *v.* Dyer, 17 Ves. 356; Rich *v.* Jackson, 4 Bro. Ch. 514; 6 Ves. Jr. 334, note; Robson *v.* Collins, 7 Ves. 130; Ogilvie *v.* Foljambe, 3 Meriv. 53; King *v.* Hamilton, 4 Peters, 311; Squire *v.* Campbell, 1 Mylne & Craig, 180; The London and Birmingham Railway Co. *v.* Winter, 1 Craig & Phillips, 60, 61, 63; Pope *v.* Garland, 4 Younge & Coll. 394; Hepburn *v.* Dunlop, 1 Wheat. 179; Malins *v.* Freeman, 2 Keen, 25, 34; 1

doctrine is that which has been already alluded to, that courts of equity ought not to be active in enforcing claims, which are not, under the actual circumstances, just, as between the parties. The statute has said, that no person shall be charged with the execution of an agreement, who has not personally, or by his agent, signed, a written agreement. But the statute does not say, that, if a written agreement is signed, the same exceptions shall not hold to it, as did before the statute. Now, before the statute, if a bill had been brought for a specific performance, and it had appeared that the agreement had been prepared contrary to the intentions of the defendant, he might have resisted the performance of it. The statute has made no alteration in this respect in the situation of the defendant. It does not say a written agreement shall bind; but only that an unwritten agreement shall not bind.¹

§ 770 a. But in the case of a plaintiff seeking the specific performance of a contract, if it is reduced to writing, courts of equity will not (as has just been hinted), ordinarily, entertain a bill, to decree a specific performance thereof with variations or additions,

Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 2, note (e); 3 Wooddes. Lect. 57, p. 428; Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 1, ch. 4, § 1, p. 432, &c.; *ante*, § 153, 154, 155, 750 a. The cases on this subject are very numerous, and are commented on with great care by Sir Edward Sugden, in his Treatise on Vendors, ch. 3, § 4, p. 125 to 140 (7th edit.); 1 Sugden on Vendors, ch. 3, § 8, n. 18 to 28, p. 224 to 231 (10th edit.), to which the reader is referred. I have cited only a few of the more prominent cases to support the text. Sir Edward Sugden states, that whether an absolute parol discharge, not followed by any other agreement, upon which the parties have acted, can be set up, even as a defence in equity, is questionable. He gives the result of the authorities, as to a parol variation, as follows: "1. That evidence of it is totally inadmissible at law. 2. That in equity the most unequivocal proof of it will be expected. 3. That, if it be proved to the satisfaction of the court, and be such a variation as the court will act upon; yet, it can only be used as a *defence* to a bill demanding a specific performance, and is inadmissible, as a ground to *compel* a specific performance; unless, 4. There has been such a part-performance of the new parol agreement as would enable the court to grant its aid in the case of an original independent agreement; and then in the view of equity, it is tantamount to a written agreement." The case of *Omerod v. Hardman*, 5 Ves. 722, turned upon a different point. There the object of the parol evidence was not to establish any fraud or mistake of the intention of the parties, but to add a new term to the contract by parol, which was held inadmissible, even as a defence against a specific performance. See also *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 10, p. 206 to 211.

¹ *Clinan v. Cooke*, 1 Sch. & Lefr. 39; *Rann v. Hughes*, 7 Term. 350, note; *Clarke v. Grant*, 14 Ves. 524.

or new terms, to be made and introduced into it by parol evidence; for, in such a case, the attempt is to enforce a contract partly in writing and partly by parol; and courts of equity deem the writing to be higher proof of the real intentions of the parties, than any parol proof can generally be; independently of the objection which arises, in many cases, under the statute of frauds.¹ There are, however, certain exceptions to this doctrine, which have been allowed to prevail; as, for example, where the omission has been by fraud;² and in cases not within the reach of the statute of frauds, where there has been a clear omission by mistake.³ So, also, where the defendant sets up, in his defence to a bill for the specific performance of a written contract, that there has been a parol variation, or addition thereto, by the parties; if the plaintiff assents thereto, he may amend his bill, and at his election have a specific performance of the written contract, with such variations or additions so set up; for, under such circumstances, there is a written admission of each party to the parol variation or addition, and there can be no danger of injury to the parties, or evasion of the rules of evidence, or of the statute of frauds.⁴ So, the court

¹ *Joynes v. Statham*, 3 Atk. 388; *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. 328; *Ramsbottom v. Gosden*, 1 Ves. & Beam. 165; *The London and Birmingham Railway Co. v. Winter*, 1 Craig & Phillips, 57, 62; *ante*, § 770.

² *Ante*, § 152, 153, 154.

³ *Henkle v. Royal Exch. Assur. Co.*, 1 Ves. 317; *Motteux v. London Assur. Co.*, 1 Atk. 545; *ante*, § 152, 155; *post*, § 1018.

⁴ *The London & Birmingham Railway Co. v. Winter*, 1 Craig & Phillips, 57. On this occasion, Lord Cottenham said: "This is not a case within the meaning of those decisions, in which the court has said, that it will not specifically perform the contract with a variation. If the court finds a written contract has been entered into, and the plaintiff says, 'That was agreed upon, but then there were certain other terms added, or certain variations made,' the court holds, that in such a case the contract is not in the writing, but in the terms, which are verbally stated, to have been the agreement between the parties; and therefore refuses specifically to perform such an agreement. On the other hand, it is quite competent for the defendant to set up a variation from the written contract; and it will depend on the particular circumstances of each case, whether that is to defeat the plaintiff's title to have a specific performance, or whether the court will perform the contract, taking care that the subject-matter of this parol agreement or understanding is also carried into effect, so that all parties may have the benefit of what they contracted for. That this is the rule of the court is sufficiently established in many cases, of which I will only mention three. *Joynes v. Statham*, 3 Atk. 388, by Lord Hardwicke; *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. Jr. 328, by Lord Eldon; and *Ramsbottom v. Gosden*, 1 Ves. & Beames, 165, by Sir Wil-

may decree a specific performance in favor of the plaintiff, notwithstanding he does not make out the case stated by his bill, if he offers to comply with the contract as set forth in the defendant's answer, and as the defendant states it.¹

[* § 770 b. But in a very late case before the Master of the Rolls, it was decided, that where the defendant set up in his answer a different agreement from that which the plaintiff sought to have enforced, and one which the plaintiff had always repudiated, he was not entitled to have the agreement set up by defendant specifically performed.² And it must be obvious to every one familiar with the proceedings in courts of equity, that, under such circumstances, the plaintiff could never claim to have the contract admitted by defendant made the basis of a decree in his favor, when it differed essentially from the one alleged in his bill; since the decree must correspond with the allegations in the bill, as well as with the proof. And it is always matter of discretion in the court, whether to allow an amendment in the bill, after issue joined. But when the parties come to an agreement in regard to the true state of the facts, it is usual, to allow the plaintiff to withdraw his replication and so amend his bill, or to take such a decree as the admissions in the defendant's answer will entitle him to have.³]

§ 771. In general, it may be stated that, to entitle a party to
liam Grant. In the last-mentioned case, Sir William Grant put it to the plaintiff whether he would take a specific performance with the performance of the condition established by parol testimony, or whether he would have the bill dismissed. The only doubt, therefore, I should have had, if Mr. Wigram had declined, on the part of the plaintiffs, to comply with the terms mentioned by the witness, would have been, whether, in this case, the variation was so stated as to entitle the defendant to the benefit of it; because he does not state it in his answer, nor does he prove it, nor attempt to prove it; but it comes out on the cross-examination of the plaintiff's witness. On such a statement, not put in issue between the parties, and which the plaintiffs had, therefore, no opportunity of meeting, I should certainly not have thought it right to act; but as it appears, on the evidence before the court, that such an understanding existed, I should probably have thought it a fit subject of inquiry, before I finally disposed of the case, if the course taken by the plaintiffs had not made it unnecessary for me to consider the point." See *ante*, 755.

¹ 1 Daniell, Ch. Pr. 513, 514, which cites *Lindsay v. Lynch*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 9; *Woollam v. Hearn*, 7 Ves. 22; *Deniston v. Little*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 11, note (2); *ib.* 149, note (2); *Story on Eq. Plead.* § 394.

² [* *Jeffery v. Stephens*, 6 Jur. n. s. 947.

³ *Doe v. Doe*, 37 N. H. 268.]

a specific performance, he must show that he has been in no default in not having performed the agreement, and that he has taken all proper steps towards the performance on his own part.¹ If he has been guilty of gross laches, or if he applies for relief after a long lapse of time, unexplained by equitable circumstances, his bill will be dismissed; for courts of equity do not, any more than courts of law, administer relief to the gross negligence of suitors.² But this doctrine is to be taken (as we shall presently see) with some qualifications. For, although courts of equity will not encourage laches, yet if there has not been a strict legal compliance with the terms of the contract, and the non-compliance does not go to the essence of the contract, relief will be granted.³

§ 772. It has been laid down, that, if a man has performed a valuable part of an agreement, and is in no default for not performing the residue, there it is but reasonable that he should have a specific execution of the other part of his contract, or at least should recover back what he has paid, so that he may not be a loser. For, since he entered upon the performance, in contemplation of the equivalent from the other party, there is no reason why an accidental loss should fall upon him any more than upon the other.⁴ A distinction has been put upon this subject by Lord

¹ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 2, and notes (c), (d); Gilbert, *Lex Prætor.* 240; *Colson v. Thompson*, 2 Wheaton, 336, 341; *Kendall v. Almy*, 2 Sumner, 278.

² *Ibid.* and note (e); *Pratt v. Carroll*, 8 Cranch, 471; *Brashier v. Gratz*, 6 Wheaton, 528; *Milward v. Earl of Thanet*, 5 Ves. 720, note; *Moore v. Blake*, 1 B. & Beatt. 68, 69; *King v. Hamilton*, 4 Peters. 311, 328; *Watson v. Reid*, 1 Russ. & Mylne, 236; *Page v. Broom*, 4 Russ. 6; *Watts v. Waddle*, 6 Peters, 389; *McNeil v. Magee*, 5 Mason, 244; *Coulson v. Walton*, 9 Peters, 62; *Holt v. Rogers*, 8 Peters, 420; *Baldwin v. Salter*, 8 Paige, 473; *Vigers v. Pike*, 8 Clark & Fin. 650.

³ *Post.* § 776, 777; *Taylor v. Longworth*, 14 Peters, 170. [* *Fuller v. Hovey*, 2 Allen, 324; *Todd v. Taft*, 7 Allen, 371. But if the contract is not in a condition to be performed substantially as made, the court will not interfere. *Park v. Johnson*, 4 Allen, 259. In a very late case in the Court of Chancery Appeal, *Collier v. McBean*, 12 Jur. n. s. 1; s. c. Law Rep. 1 Ch. App. 81, it was said, that where a bill for specific performance by a vendor, has been dismissed in the court below on a question of title, it requires a very strong case for the Court of Appeal to force the title upon the purchaser. But a merely formal objection to the title is no impediment to a decree of specific performance. *Minton v. Kirwood*, 12 Jur. n. s. 86.]

⁴ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 3; *Gilb. Lex Prætor.* 240, 241; *post.* § 775, 976.

Chief Baron Gilbert, which is entitled to consideration, because it apparently reconciles authorities which might otherwise seem discordant. It is the distinction between cases in which the plaintiff is *in statu quo* as to all that part of his agreement which he has performed, and those cases in which he is not *in statu quo*. In the former cases, equity will not enforce the agreement, if the plaintiff cannot completely perform the whole of his part of it; in the latter cases, equity will not enforce it, notwithstanding he is incapable of performing the remainder by a subsequent accident.¹

§ 773. Thus, upon a marriage settlement, A. contracted to settle a manor on his wife and the heirs of their bodies, and to clear it of encumbrances, and to settle a separate maintenance on her, and likewise to sell some pensions, in order to make a further provision for her and the issue of the marriage; and his father-in-law agreed to settle £3,000 per annum on A. for life, remainder to the wife for life, and so to the issue of the marriage. A. cleared the manor of encumbrances, and settled it accordingly, and settled also the separate maintenance; but he did not sell the pensions, nor settle the further provisions. The wife died without issue; and A. brought his bill to have the £3,000 settled on him during his life. The court refused to decree it; because A. was *in statu quo*, as to all that part of the agreement which he had performed, and not having performed the whole, and the other part being now impossible, and no compensation being possible to be adjusted for it, he had no title in equity to a specific performance, since such performance would not be mutual. But the issue of A., if any, might have been relieved, because they would have been in no default. This case illustrates the first proposition.²

§ 774. But (which is the second case) if a man has performed so much of the agreement, as that he is not *in statu quo*, and is in no default for not performing the residue, there he shall have a

¹ Gilb. *Lex Prætor.* 240; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 6, § 3, note (*f*); *Newland on Contr.* ch. 12, p. 249.

² Gilb. *Lex Prætor.* 240, 241; *Feversham v. Watson*, *Rep. Temp. Finch*, 445; s. c. 2 *Freem.* 35. But see *Hovenden's note* to 2 *Freem.* 35 (4). The case seems to have been put in the reports upon the ground that the covenants of the plaintiff were by way of condition precedent, which could not be dispensed with in equity. *Rep. Temp. Finch*, 447; 2 *Freem.* 35. See *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 12, p. 249, 250.

specific execution of the agreement from the other party. As, if a man has contracted for a portion to be received with the wife, and has agreed to settle lands of a certain value upon the wife, and her issue, free of encumbrances; and he sells part of his lands to disencumber the other lands, and is proceeding to disencumber and settle the rest. In such a case, if the wife should die without issue before the settlement is actually made, yet he shall have the portion, because he cannot be placed *in statu quo*, having sold a part of his lands; and there was no default in him, since he was going on to perform his contract; and, therefore, the accident of the wife's death shall not prejudice him.¹

§ 775. Where the terms of an agreement have not been strictly complied with, or are incapable of being strictly complied with; still, if there has not been gross negligence in the party, and it is conscientious that the agreement should be performed; and if compensation may be made for an injury occasioned by non-compliance with the strict terms; in all such cases courts of equity will interfere, and decree a specific performance. For the doctrine of courts of equity is, not forfeiture, but compensation; ² and nothing but such a decree will, in such cases, do entire justice between the parties.³ Indeed, in some cases courts of equity will decree a specific execution, not according to the letter of the contract, if that will be unconscientious; but they will modify it according to the change of circumstances.⁴

¹ Gilb. Lex Prætor. 241, 242; Meredith v. Wynn, 1 Eq. Abr. 71; s. c. Prec. Ch. 312; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 4, note (f).

² Page v. Broom, 4 Russ. 6, 19; ante, § 772; post, § 776.

³ Davis v. Hone, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 347; Lennon v. Napper, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 684; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 2, note (e); Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2 ch. 4, § 1, p. 460, 461; Winne v. Reynolds, 6 Paige, 407; Taylor v. Longworth, 14 Peters, 173.

⁴ Ibid.; ante, § 750 a; Mechanics' Bank of Alexandria v. Lynn, 1 Peters, 376. On this occasion, Mr. Justice Thompson, in delivering the opinion of the court, said: "But the court ought not to decree performance according to the letter, when, from change of circumstances, mistake, or misapprehension, it would be unconscientious so to do. The court may so modify the agreement, as to do justice, as far as circumstances will permit, and refuse specific execution, unless the party seeking it will comply with such modifications as justice requires." The remarks of Lord Redesdale on this same point, deserve to be cited at large. "A court of equity," says he, "frequently decrees specific performance where the action at law has been lost by the default of the very party seeking the specific performance, if it be, notwithstanding, conscientious, that the agreement should

§ 776. One of the most frequent occasions on which courts of equity are asked to decree a specific performance of contract, is, where the terms for the performance and completion of the contract have not, in point of time, been strictly complied with. Time is not generally deemed in equity to be of the essence of the contract, unless the parties have expressly so treated it, or it necessarily follows from the nature and circumstances of the contract.¹

be performed; as in cases where the terms of the agreement have not been strictly performed on the part of the person seeking specific performance, and to sustain an action at law performance must be averred according to the very terms of the contract, nothing but specific execution of the contract, so far as it can be executed, will do justice in such a case." *Davis v. Hone*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 347. Again, in *Lennon v. Napper*, 2 Sch. & Lefr. 684, he said: "The courts, in all cases of contracts for estates in land, have been in the habit of relieving, where the party, from his own neglect, had suffered a lapse of time, and from that, or other circumstances, could not maintain an action to recover damages at law. And even where nothing exists to prevent his suing at law, so many things are necessary to enable him to recover at law, that the formalities alone render it very inconvenient and hazardous so to proceed; nor could, in many cases, the legal remedy be adequate to the demands of justice. Courts of equity have, therefore, enforced contracts specifically, where no action for damages could be maintained; for, at law, the party plaintiff must have strictly performed his part, and the inconvenience of insisting upon that in all cases was sufficient to require the interference of courts of equity. They dispense with that which would make compliance with what the law requires oppressive; and in various cases of such contracts, they are in the constant habit of relieving the man, who has acted fairly, though negligently. Thus in the case of an estate sold by auction, there is a condition to forfeit the deposit, if the purchase be not completed within a certain time; yet the court is in the constant habit of relieving against the lapse of time. And so in the case of mortgages, and in many instances, relief is given against mere lapse of time, where lapse of time is not essential to the substance of the contract.

¹ *Newland on Contr.* ch. 12, p. 280 to 255; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 1, ch. 6, § 2, note (e); *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 8, § 1, p. 359, § 4, p. 375 to 379 (7th edit.); *Wynn v. Morgan*, 7 *Ves.* 202; *Gibson v. Patterson*, 1 *Atk.* 12; *Pineke v. Curteis*, 4 *Bro. Ch.* 329; *Lloyd v. Collett*, 4 *Bro. Ch.* 469 (*Tomlin's* edit.); 4 *Ves.* 689, note; *Omerod v. Hardman*, 5 *Ves.* 736; *Seton v. Slade*, 7 *Ves.* 265; *Hall v. Smith*, 14 *Ves.* 426; *Savage v. Brocksopp*, 18 *Ves.* 335; *Hertford v. Boore*, 5 *Ves.* 719; *Reynolds v. Nelson*, 6 *Mad.* 19, 25, 26; *Newman v. Rogers*, 4 *Bro. Ch.* 391; *Tierman v. Roland*, 3 *Harris*, 429; *Doloret v. Rothschild*, 1 *Sim & Stu.* 590; *Heaphy v. Hall*, 2 *Sim. & Stu.* 29; *Hepburn v. Dundas*, 5 *Cranch*, 262; *Brashier v. Gratz*, 6 *Wheat.* 528; *Taylor v. Longworth*, 14 *Peters*, 173, 174; *Baldwin v. Salter*, 8 *Paige*, 473; *Jones v. Robbins*, 29 *Maine*, 351; *ante*, § 771. The doctrine was formerly carried to an extravagant extent in favor of relief. But in recent times courts of equity have endeavored to restrict it to very moderate limits. See *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 8, § 1, p. 359, 360, 361 (7th edit.);

It is true that courts of equity have regard to time, so far as it respects the good faith and diligence of the parties. But if cir-
1 Sugden on Vendors, ch. 5, § 2, n. 1 to 15; id. § 3, n. 27 (10th edit.). Mr. Baron Alderson, in the recent case of *Hipwell v. Knight*, 1 Younge & Collyer, 415, has put this whole subject in its true light; and I gladly avail myself of the opportunity to quote his remarks. "Now the first question," said he, "is, whether time is of the essence of this agreement. After examining, with as much attention as I can, the various cases brought before me during the argument, it seems to me to be the result of them all, that a court of equity is to be governed by this principle: it is to examine the contract, not merely as a court of law does, to ascertain what the parties have in terms expressed to be the contract, but what is in truth the real intention of the parties, and to carry that into effect. But in so doing, I should think it prudent, in the first place, to look carefully at what the parties have expressed; because, in general, they must be taken to express what they intend; and the burden ought, in good reason, to be thrown on those who assert the contrary. In the case of a mortgage, however, which I use rather for the purpose of illustrating the principle, than as at all parallel to the present case, the court, looking at the real contract, which is a pledge of the estate for a debt, treats the time mentioned in the mortgage-deed as only a formal part of it, and decrees accordingly; taking it to be clear, that the general intention should override the words of the particular stipulation. So, in the ordinary case of the purchase of an estate, and the fixing a particular day for the completion of the title, the court seems to have considered that the general object being only the sale of the estate for a given sum, the particular day named is merely formal; and the stipulation means, in truth, that the purchase shall be completed within a reasonable time, regard being had to all the circumstances of the case, and the nature of the title to be made. But this is but a corollary from the general position, which is, that the real contract, and all the stipulations really intended to be complied with, literally shall be carried into effect. We must take care, however, that we do not mistake the corollary for the original proposition. If, therefore, the thing sold be of greater or less value according to the effluxion of time, it is manifest that time is of the essence of the contract; and a stipulation as to time must then be literally complied with in equity, as well as in law. The cases of the sale of stock, and of a reversion, are instances of this. So also if it appear that the object of one party, known to the other, was, that the property should be conveyed on or before a given period, as the case of a house for residence, or the like. I do not see, therefore, why, if the parties choose, even arbitrarily, provided both of them intend so to do, to stipulate for a particular thing to be done at a particular time, such a stipulation is not to be carried literally into effect in a court of equity. That is the real contract. The parties had a right to make it. Why, then, should a court of equity interfere to make a new contract, which the parties have not made? It seems to me, therefore, that the conclusion at which Sir Edward Sugden, in his valuable treatise on this subject, has arrived, is founded in law and good sense." See also *Potter v. Tuttle*, 22 Conn. 519; *Coslake v. Till*, 1 Russ. 376; *Doloret v. Rothschild*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 590; *King v. Wilson*, 6 Beavan, 124; [**Parkin v. Thorold*, 16 Beavan, 59. It is here said, that in equity even, time may be made of the essence of a contract,

cumstances of a reasonable nature have disabled the party from a strict compliance, or if he comes, *recenti facto*, to ask for a specific performance; the suit is treated with indulgence, and generally with favor by the court.¹ But then, in such cases, it should be clear that the remedies are mutual;² that there has been no change of circumstances affecting the character or justice of the contract;³ that compensation for the delay can be fully and beneficially given;⁴ that he who asks a specific performance is in a condition to perform his own part of the contract;⁵ and that he has shown himself ready, desirous, prompt, and eager to perform the contract.⁶ Even where time is of the essence of the contract, it may be waived by proceeding in the purchase after the time has elapsed; and if time was not originally made by the parties of the essence of the contract, yet it may become so by notice, if the other party is afterwards guilty of improper delays in completing the purchase.⁷

§ 777. Courts of equity will also relieve the party vendor, by decreeing a specific performance, where he has been unable to comply with his contract according to the terms of it, from the state of his title at the time, if he comes within a reasonable time, and the defect is cured.⁸ So, if there has been no unnecessary

by express stipulation, or necessary implication, or by subsequent notice insisting upon the contract being completed within a reasonable time. But in a contract for the lease of working mines, time, though not named, is, from the fluctuating nature of the property, considered as of the essence of the contract, and the intended lessee may therefore fix a reasonable time for completion, and on default may rescind the contract. *Macbryde v. Weekes*, 22 Beavan, 533.]

¹ *Ibid.*; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 461, 462; *ante*, § 771; *post*, § 777.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 12, note (c), and the case there cited.

³ *Pratt v. Law*, 9 Cranch, 456, 493, 494; *Brashier v. Gratz*, 6 Wheaton, 528; *Mechanics' Bank of Alexandria v. Lynn*, 1 Peters, 383; *Payne v. Meller*, 6 Ves. 349; *Taylor v. Longworth*, 14 Peters, 172.

⁴ *Pratt v. Law*, 9 Cranch, 456, 493, 494.

⁵ *Morgan v. Morgan*, 2 Wheaton, 290; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 8, § 2, p. 365 to 375 (7th edit.).

⁶ *Millard v. Earl of Thanet*, 5 Ves. 420, note; *Alley v. Deschamps*, 13 Ves. 228; *Moore v. Blake*, 1 B. & Beatt. 68, 69; *Newland on Contracts*, ch. 12, p. 242 to 248; *King v. Hamilton*, 4 Peters, 311.

⁷ *King v. Wilson*, 6 Beavan, 124.

⁸ See the cases cited in *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 8, § 2, p. 365 to 375 (7th edit.); *id.* ch. 6, p. 260, § 2, p. 279, § 3, p. 290 (7th edit.); 1 *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 5, § 2, n. 6, 8; *id.* § 3, n. 1 to 9, p. 415 to 420; *Guest v. Homfray*, 5

delay, courts of equity will sometimes decree a specific performance in favor of the vendor, although he is unable to make a good title at the time when the bill is brought, if he is in a condition to make such a title at or before the time of the decree.¹ So, if the circumstances of the quality or quantity of land are not correctly described, and the misdescription is not very material, and admits of complete compensation, courts of equity will decree a specific performance. In all such cases, courts of equity look to the substance of the contract, and do not allow small matters of variance to interfere with the manifest intention of the parties, and especially where full compensation can be made to the party on account of any false or erroneous description.²

[* § 777 *a*. But notwithstanding the rule is well established in courts of equity, that time will not be regarded as indispensable, in regard to decreeing specific performance of contracts for the actual sale of lands on one side and the actual purchase on the other, it is different where the contract gives a mere election to purchase upon certain conditions. Accordingly, where upon a lease, with the right of purchase within seven years, upon giving three months' notice, and paying a fixed sum at the expiration of such notice, and the lessee gave the requisite notice, but did not pay the money in time, a bill for specific performance was dismissed.³ And a similar decision was made by the Lord Chancellor,⁴ where his lordship said, "The things required must be done in the order of sequence stipulated. These were notice and the payment of the money, on a day certain." And a court of equity

Ves. 818; *Newland on Contr.* ch. 12, p. 227 to 230; *Esdaile v. Stephenson*, 1 Sim. & Stu. 122; *Wynn v. Morgan*, 7 Ves. 202; *Hepburn v. Auld*, 5 Cranch, 262; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 68, p. 465, 466; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 457; *Hepburn v. Dunlop*, 1 Wheat. 179; *ante*, § 771.

¹ *Hepburn v. Dunlop*, 1 Wheat. 179; *ante*, § 766, 771; *Hoggart v. Scott*, 1 Ross. & Mylne, 293; s. c. *Tamlyn*, 500.

² 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 2, note (e); *Calcraft v. Roebuck*, 1 Ves. Jr. 220; *Calverley v. Williams*, 1 Ves. Jr. 212; *Dyer v. Hargrave*, 10 Ves. 507; *Guest v. Homfray*, 5 Ves. 818; *Newland on Contr.* ch. 12, p. 251 to 255; *Drewe v. Hanson*, 6 Ves. 675; *Halsey v. Grant*, 13 Ves. 76, 77; *Sugden on Vendors*, ch. 6, § 2, 3, p. 279 to 300 (7th edit.); *Hovenden on Frauds*, Vol. 2, ch. 16, p. 31 to 34; *King v. Barbeau*, 6 Johns. Ch. 38; *Hanbury v. Litchfield*, 2 Mylne & Keen, 629; *Horniblow v. Shirley*, 13 Ves. 81. [* See *Carver v. Richards*, 6 Jur. N. s. 667.]

³ [* *Lord Ranelagh v. Melton*, 10 Jur. N. s. 1141; s. c. 2 *Drew. & Sm.* 278.

⁴ *Weston v. Collins*, 11 Jur. N. s. 190.

will never decree specific performance in favor of the vendor of real estate, when the title is so defective as to expose the vendee to litigation. And that possession has been taken and repairs made will make no difference, if it were done without the knowledge of any defect in the title.¹]

§ 778. But where there is a substantial defect in the estate sold, either in the title itself, or in the representation or description, or the nature, character, situation, extent,² or quality of it, which is unknown to the vendee, and in regard to which he is not put upon inquiry, there a specific performance will not be decreed against him.³ Upon the like ground, a party contracting for the

¹ *Richmond v. Gray*, 3 Allen, 25.]

² See *Belknap v. Sealey*, 2 Duer, 577; *ante*, § 141.

³ Sugden on Vendors, ch. 6, § 2, p. 279, &c., § 3, p. 290 (7th edit.); 1 Sugden on Vendors, ch. 7, § 3, n. 1 to 24, p. 525 to 534 (10th edit.); *id.* § 4, n. 1 to 38, p. 536 to 550; *Lowndes v. Lane*, 2 Cox, 363; *Ellard v. Landaff*, 1 B. & Beatt. 249, 250; *Grant v. Meunt, Cooper*, 173; *Dyer v. Hargrave*, 10 Ves. 505; *Shirley v. Stratton*, 1 Bro. Ch. 440; *Hovenden on Frauds*, ch. 16, p. 1 to 65; *Drewe v. Hanson*, 6 Ves. 678; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 9, note (i); *Waters v. Travis*, 9 Johns. 450; *Bowyer v. Bright*, 13 Price, 702, 703, 704; *Binkes v. Rokeby*, 2 Swanst. 222; *Collier v. Jenkins*, 1 Younge, 295; *Dalby v. Pullen*, 3 Sim. 29; *Portman v. Mill*, 2 Russ. 570; *Bowyer v. Bright*, 13 Price, 698; s. c. 1 McClelland, 479; *Wood v. Griffith*, 1 Swanst. 54; *Watts v. Waddle*, 6 Peters, 389. Lord Erskine, in *Halsey v. Grant* (13 Ves. 76, 77), said: "If a court of equity can compel a party to perform a contract that is substantially different from that which he entered into, and proceed upon the principle of compensation, as it has compelled him to execute a contract substantially different and substantially less than that for which he stipulated, without some very distinct limitation of such jurisdiction, having all the precision of law, the rights of mankind under contracts must be extremely uncertain. There is no doubt, that this jurisdiction had its origin upon the foundation of a legal right, the law giving the title; but a court of law, from the modes in which justice is there administered, not being capable of giving a complete remedy, all the relief to which the party was entitled. This jurisdiction began so long ago as the time of King Henry the 7th; and though courts of equity then proceeded upon that principle, yet, the courts of law thought proper to resist the jurisdiction. *Bromage v. Genning* (1 Roll, 368), in the fourteenth year of King James I. was the plainest case that can be stated; and the ground taken against the jurisdiction, the most untenable, preposterous, and unjust. This most beneficial jurisdiction was, in that instance, maintained in equity. When the courts of equity had quieted these doubts, and maintained their jurisdiction, they could not confine it to cases of strict legal title; for another principle, equally beneficial, is equally well known and established; that equity does not permit the forms of law to be made instruments of injustice, and will interpose against parties attempting to avail themselves of the rigid rule of law for unconscientious purposes. Where,

entirety of an estate, will not be compelled to take an undivided aliquot part of it.¹

[* § 778 *a*. And where the plaintiffs, a railway company, agreed with the defendants to execute a branch railway according to specifications furnished by their engineer, and to give a bond to secure the performance of the contract, it was held the agreement could not be enforced, as regards the construction of the railway, because, from the nature of the works, the court could not superintend their execution consistently with public convenience; nor could they enforce the plaintiff's portion of the contract, to procure the land; and they would not therefore decree a part-performance of the contract, by the execution of the stipulated bond, if, indeed, in any case of the advance of money, and the agreement to execute a bond for its repayment, a court of equity will compel the execution of the bond. The remedy at law would seem ample in all such cases.²

§ 778 *b*. It seems to be a settled rule in regard to decreeing specific performance of contracts in courts of equity, that it will not be done, when the terms of the contract are such, that the court cannot superintend the execution so as to secure full performance on the part of the plaintiff.³ So, also, if there is any

therefore, advantage is taken of a circumstance that does not admit a strict performance of the contract, if the failure is not substantial, equity will interfere. If, for instance, the contract is for a term of 99 years in a farm, and it appears that the vendor has only 98 or 97 years, he must be nonsuited in an action. But equity will not so deal with him; and if the other party can have the substantial benefit of his contract, that slight difference being of no importance to him, equity will interfere. Thus was introduced the principle of compensation, now so well established, a principle which I have no disposition to shake." See also *Morgan's Heirs v. Morgan*, 2 Wheat. 290; *Hepburn v. Auld*, 5 Cranch, 262; *Winne v. Reynolds*, 6 Paige, 407.

¹ *Dalby v. Pullen*, 3 Sim. 29.

² [* *South Wales Railway Co. v. Wythes*, 1 Kay & J. 186.

³ *Peto v. Br. U. & Tunb. Wells Railw. Co.*, 9 Law T. N. S. 227; s. c. 1 H. & M. 468. See also *Ogden v. Fossick*, 9 Jur. N. S. 288. And it will make no difference in this respect that the contract has been acted upon for some time; if the court cannot enforce one portion of it, it will not decree specific performance of any part of it. *Ib.* But in the very recent case of *Wilson v. West Hartlepool Railw. & Harbor Company*, 11 Jur. N. S. 124, it was held that the fact that the contract contains stipulations on the part of the plaintiff, which could not be specifically enforced by a court of equity, will not preclude a decree of specific performance of the rest of the contract, where it was the intention of the parties that the stipulations on the part of the plaintiff should rest only in covenant.

inequality and hardship in the contract, as against the defendant; or there be good reason to doubt, if the defendant entered into it understandingly, or whether he might not have been suffering some degree of obscuration of clear perception by reason of intoxication.¹

§ 778 c. Nor will courts of equity specifically enforce any contract, between the immediate parties, which would operate incidentally as a fraud upon others, or the public generally. As where one had infringed the trade-mark of another and the matter was compromised by paying £1,000 in full for all sales made, with a stipulation not to prosecute those who had bought of him, and the defendant was prosecuting those who had bought of the plaintiff, for sales made by them after the settlement; the court inclined to regard such sales as not embraced in the settlement; but said if they were, the court could not interfere, since they were a fraud upon the public.²

§ 778 d. The courts of equity will decree specific performance of contracts with the promoters of railways, for the sale of lands to the contemplated company, notwithstanding objections, for want of privity, want of consideration, want of mutuality and vagueness.³ But where the company, when formed, proceeded under their compulsory powers against such land-owners, without claiming any special contract for the purchase, it was held sufficient reason for refusing a decree for specific performance.⁴ In contracts with railway companies for the making and maintaining of such, and so many crossings as should be notified to the company, in writing, within one month after the company obtaining possession of the land, it was considered that time was of the essence of the contract, and no such notice being given within the time named, the court declined to grant a decree for specific performance.⁵

§ 778 e. There is a considerable conflict of opinion among the
This distinction, however, does not seem to rest upon any very satisfactory ground, but being the decision of the Court of Chancery Appeal, upon full argument and consideration, will probably have the effect to make cases of this character, like others for specific performance, rest in the discretion of the court. See *Blackett v. Bates*, 2 H. & M. 270; s. c. Law Rep. 1 Ch. App. 117.

¹ *Vivers v. Tuck*, 9 Law T. N. s. 554; s. c. 1 Moore, P. C. C. N. s. 516.

² *Oldham v. James*, 14 Ir. Ch. 81.

³ *Bedford & Camb. Railw. Co. v. Stanley*, 2 J. & H. 746.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Darnley v. London, Chatham, & D. R. Co.*, 9 Jur. N. s. 452.

English equity judges in regard to enforcing covenants by railway companies with land-owners, against making erections upon the land, whenever such covenants come to interfere with the extension and enlargement of the public works of the company under their parliamentary powers. Thus in a very recent case which came before the Court of Chancery Appeal, from the decision of Vice-Chancellor Kindersley, granting a decree of specific performance of such a covenant, the Lords Justices were divided in opinion, and the decree of the Vice Chancellor was, therefore, affirmed. The points ruled were, that where a railway company, in purchasing land, covenanted with the owner not to build upon it above a certain height, and they afterwards obtain a parliamentary grant to widen their line, the covenant will prevent them from building, so as to widen their line; secondly, that if the covenant was not invalid at law, as being against public policy, as the majority of the judges held it was not, a court of equity ought to withhold a decree of specific performance; thirdly, that where a court of equity refuses to enforce a covenant, because the damage is inconsiderable, or would be inappreciable, the case must be perfectly clear.¹

§ 778 *f*. In a very late case² before Lord Cranworth, Chancellor, on a bill for specific performance of an award, the learned judge said, "I conceive it to be clear, that both parties to the award obtained the same right to specific performance which they would have had if this had been not an award resulting from an agreement, but simply an agreement entered into between them." But the court reversed the decree below in this case and dismissed the bill upon the ground that they could not specifically enforce the agreement on the part of the plaintiff, and that, unless they could do so, they would not grant a decree for specific performance on the part of the defendant.

§ 778 *g*. Where the plaintiff filed his bill for the specific performance of a resolution of the board of railway directors, under which he claimed to be entitled to a certain number of shares, and prayed that if all the shares had been allotted, so that none could be awarded him, that the directors should be decreed to indemnify him out of their own shares or compensate him in damages, and it appeared that the shares had all been allotted, it was held the bill

¹ *Lloyd v. London, Chatham & D. Railw. Co.*, 11 Jur. N. S. 380.

² *Blackett v. Bates*, 12 Jur. N. S. 151.]

must fail, the specific performance claimed having become impossible, and the alternative being a mere claim for damages.¹ Where the owner of land sold the same to a railway company and gave a right to take possession upon making a certain deposit and stipulated for five *per cent* interest upon the price agreed, in case of delay in completing the purchase, it was held the court could not compel the company to pay the purchase-money into court before final decree against them, there being nothing in the contract to that effect; although if he had proceeded under the statute the company might have been compelled to pay the price of the land into court upon entering into possession.² Where the plaintiff had withdrawn his opposition to a railway on a stipulation on the part of the company to build a road and an approach in a particular manner, and the company afterwards varied the level of their line and the course and inclination of the road; whereupon the plaintiff filed his bill for specific performance, and a motion for injunction was ordered to stand till the hearing, the company undertaking to abide by the order of the court as to altering their works, and subsequently the road was opened for traffic, it was held the company could not urge the public convenience, in not having the traffic interrupted, against the claim of the plaintiff to have a decree for specific performance.³]

§ 779. We have thus far principally spoken of cases of suits by the vendor against the purchaser for a specific performance, where the contract has not been, or cannot be, strictly complied with. But suits may also be brought by the purchaser for a specific performance under similar circumstances, where the vendor is incapable of making a complete title to all the property sold, or where there has been a substantial misdescription of it in important particulars; or where the terms, as to the time and manner of execution, have not been punctually or reasonably complied with on the part of the vendor. In these and the like cases, as it would be unjust to allow the vendor to take advantage of his own wrong, or default, or misdescription, courts of equity allow the purchaser an election to proceed with the purchase *pro tanto*, or to abandon it altogether. The general rule (for it is not universal) in all such cases, is, that the purchaser, if he chooses, is entitled to have

¹ *Ferguson v. Wilson*, Law Rep. 2 Ch. App. 77.

² *Pryse v. Cambrian Railw. Co.*, Law Rep. 2 Ch. App. 444.

³ *Raphael v. Thames Valley Railway*, Law Rep. 2 Ch. App. 147.

the contract specifically performed, as far as the vendor can perform it, and to have an abatement out of the purchase-money or compensation, for any deficiency in the title, quantity, quality, description, or other matters touching the estate.¹ But if the purchaser should insist upon such a performance, the court will grant the relief only upon his compliance with equitable terms.²

§ 780. Perhaps it may be truly said, that in some of the cases, in which, in former times, the strict terms of the contract, as to time, description, quantity, quality, and other circumstances of the estate sold, were dispensed with, courts of equity went beyond the true limits, to which every jurisdiction of this sort should be confined, as it amounted to a substitution *pro tanto*, of what the parties had not contracted for.³ But the tendency of the modern decisions is to bring the doctrine within such moderate bounds as seem clearly indicated by the principles of equity, and by a reasonable regard to the convenience of mankind, as well as to the common accidents, mistakes, infirmities, and inequalities belonging to all human transactions.⁴

§ 781. We have hitherto been considering cases of contracts respecting lands within the reach of the statute of frauds. But other cases within the reach of other clauses of the statute of

¹ Paton v. Rogers, 1 Ves. & B. 351; Hill v. Buckley, 17 Ves. 394; Ketchum v. Stout, 20 Ohio, 453; Springle v. Shields, 17 Ala. 297; Millegan v. Cooke, 16 Ves. 1; Waters v. Travis, 9 Johns. 465; Todd v. Gee, 17 Ves. 278, 279; Wood v. Griffith, 1 Swanst. 54; Mestaer v. Gillespie, 11 Ves. 640; Graham v. Oliver, 3 Beav. 124, 128. In this last case, Lord Langdale said: "The general rule, subject to some qualification, undoubtedly is, that where a party has entered into a contract for the sale of more than he has, the purchaser, if he thinks fit to accept that which it is in the power of the vendor to give, is entitled to a performance to that extent. There is, however, a very great difficulty in all these cases, and I scarcely know how it can be overcome; though a partial performance only, it has been somewhat incorrectly called a specific performance. The sentiments of Lord Redesdale on this point, as expressed by him in two cases before him, are strongly impressed on my mind. The court has thought it right, in many cases, to get over those difficulties for the purpose of compelling parties to perform the agreements into which they have entered; and it is right they should be compelled to do so, where it can be done without any great preponderance of inconvenience." King v. Wilson, 6 Beavan, 124.

² Paton v. Rogers, 1 Ves. & Beam. 351; Thomas v. Deering, 1 Keen, 729, 743, 747; Spingle v. Shields, 17 Ala. 297.

³ See Halsey v. Grant, 13 Ves. 76; Drewe v. Hanson, 6 Ves. 678; Bowyer v. Bright, 13 Price, 702.

⁴ Newland on Contr. ch. 12, p. 254; Drewe v. Hanson, 6 Ves. 678.

frauds have occurred, and may again occur, in which, also, the remedial justice of courts of equity ought to be exerted by decreeing a specific performance of the contemplated act of trust. Thus, if a man, in confidence of the parol promise of another to perform the intended act, should omit to make certain provisions, gifts, or arrangements for other persons, by will or otherwise, such a promise would be specifically enforced in equity against such promisee; although founded on a parol declaration, creating a trust contrary to the statute of frauds; for it would be a fraud upon all the other parties to permit him to derive a benefit from his own breach of duty and obligation.¹ Therefore, where a testator, by his will, gave an annuity to his nephew, and his brother (who was his executor and devisee of his real estate) promised to pay the annuity, otherwise the testator would have charged it on his lands devised; it was decreed, that the executor should specifically perform it by paying the annuity, although he had fully administered all the personal assets.² So, where a testator intended by will to fell timber to raise portions for his younger children; but his eldest son being by, desired him not to fell the timber, because it would deface the estate, and promised that he would answer for the value of it to his brothers and sisters, and the testator forbore to cut the timber, and after his death the eldest son refused to perform his promise, he was held bound by it.³ So, where a tenant in tail was about to suffer a recovery, in order to provide for his younger children, and was kept by the issue in tail from so doing, by a promise to make such a provision, the issue in tail was decreed to perform the promise.⁴ So, where an executor promised the testator to pay a legacy, and told the testator he need not put it into his will, he was decreed specifically to perform it.⁵ So, where a testator was about altering his will, for fear that there would not be assets enough to pay all the legacies, and his heir-at-law persuaded him not to alter it, promising to

¹ 3 Wooddes. Lect. 57, p. 436; *ante*, § 64, 256, 439.

² *Oldham v. Litchfield*, 2 Vern. 506; s. c. 2 Freem. 284; *ante*, § 64, 256.

³ *Dutton v. Pool*, 2 Lev. 211; s. c. 1 Vent. 318; s. c. cited 2 Freem. 285; *ante*, § 64, 256, 439.

⁴ 3 Wooddes. Lect. 57, p. 436.

⁵ *Reech v. Kennigate*, Ambl. 67; s. c. 1 Ves. 123; *Barrow v. Greenough*, Ves. 152, 154; *Mestaer v. Gillespie*, 11 Ves. 638; *Chamberlain v. Agar*, 2 V. & Beam. 262; *Deveniah v. Baines*, Prec. Ch. 3.

pay all the legacies, he was decreed specifically to perform his promise.¹

§ 782. These may suffice as illustrations of the class of cases calling for a specific performance, which are within the purview of the statute of frauds. And we shall now proceed, in the next place, to a brief statement of the other class of cases already referred to, namely, those, where relief is sought under written or parol contracts not within the statute of frauds. Many of these cases have already been incidentally taken notice of under the other heads, and especially under the heads of Accident, Mistake, and Fraud.²

§ 783. Illustrations may easily be put, of cases where no action whatsoever would lie at law between the parties. Thus, if A. should enter into a contract with B., which contract B. should afterwards assign to a third person, there no action would be maintainable at law by such assignee against A., or by A. against such assignee, on such contract. But a bill in equity would well lie by either of them against the other, either to enforce a specific execution of the contract, or to set it aside in the same manner, and under the same circumstances, as such a bill would lie between the immediate parties to it.³ We all know, that privity of contract between the parties is, in general, indispensable to a suit at law; but courts of equity act in favor of all persons claiming by assignment under the parties, independent of any such privity.⁴

§ 784. Upon similar principles, if a person has, in writing, contracted to sell land, and afterwards refuses to perform his contract, and then sells the land to a purchaser with notice of the contract, the latter will be compelled to perform the contract of his vendor, for he stands upon the same equity; and although he is not personally liable on the contract, yet he will be decreed to convey the land in the same manner as his vendor.⁵ In other words, he is treated as a trustee of the first vendee. So, if a power is reserved

¹ Chamberlaine v. Chamberlaine, 2 Freem. 34.

² See *ante*, § 54, 99, 152 to 157, 161, 330, 331. See also 3 Wooddes. Lect. 58, p. 471, 472; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 3, § 11, and *id.* B. 1, ch. 1, § 8, note (o); Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 456, 457.

³ See Williams v. Steward, 3 Meriv. 485, 486; and Duke of Chandos v. Talbot, 2 P. Will. 608; Champion v. Brown, 6 Johns. Ch. 402.

⁴ *Post*, § 1040, 1057, 1057 a.

⁵ Champion v. Brown, 6 Johns. Ch. 402; Potter v. Sanders, 6 Hare, 1; Foss v. Haynes, 31 Maine, 89.

in a marriage settlement, for a feme covert to dispose of her separate property, real and personal, courts of equity will enforce the specific performance of it in favor of any party claiming title from her against her husband, although at law it might, in many cases, be difficult to prevent the latter from exercising power over it.¹

§ 785. The cases of contracts to grant an annuity for a life or lives, to settle the boundaries between contiguous estates, and to levy a fine, have been already mentioned as proper matters for a bill for a specific performance.² So, where an agreement was made by persons, who were presumptive heirs to another person, to divide the estate equally between them, without any reference to any will which might be made by such person, it was held valid; and that it should be specifically decreed.³ So, contracts to invest money in land, and, on the other hand, to turn land into money, have been held proper for a specific performance.⁴ So, a contract to make mutual wills, if one of the parties has died, having made a will according to the agreement, will be decreed in equity to be specifically executed by the surviving party, if he has enjoyed the benefit of the will of the other party.⁵ So, a general covenant to indemnify a party for the purchase-money, due for land, upon an assignment thereof to an assignee, although it sounds only in damages, will be decreed to be specifically performed by the assignee, upon the principle of *quia timet*.⁶

§ 786. Another curious case, illustrative of the extent to which courts of equity will go, to enforce a specific performance of contracts against parties and privies in estate, in cases where a fraudulent evasion is attempted, has been recently propounded and acted upon in the House of Lords. If a person covenants, or

¹ Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 1, ch. 3, § 2, p. 207, 208; id. B. 1, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 430, 431; Rippon v. Dawding, Ambler, 565; Power v. Bailey, 1 B. & Beatt. 49; Fettiplace v. Gorges, 3 Bro. Ch. 8; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 58, p. 444; *post*, § 788, 789, 790.

² *Ante*, § 722, 729, 730; Nield v. Smith, 14 Ves. 490; Penn v. Lord Baltimore, 1 Ves. 444.

³ Beckley v. Newland, 2 P. Will. 182; id. 608; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 58, p. 451; Newland on Contr. ch. 6, p. 110; *ante*, § 265.

⁴ Newland on Contr. ch. 3, p. 43, 47, ch. 6, p. 109.

⁵ Dufour v. Ferrara, cited 3 Ves. 412, 416; Goilmere v. Battison, 1 Vern. 48; Newland on Contr. ch. 6, p. 111.

⁶ Champion v. Brown, 6 Johns. Ch. 405, 406, and the cases there cited; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 8, and note (y); *ante*, § 730; *post*, § 849, 850.

agrees, or in any other manner validly binds himself to give to A., by his will, as much property as he gives to any other child, he may put it out of his power to do so, by giving away all his property in his lifetime. Or, if he binds himself to give to A. as much as he gives to B. by his will, he may, in his lifetime, give to B. what he pleases, so as, by his will, he shall give to A. as much as he gives to B. But then the gifts which he makes in his lifetime to B. must be out and out. For, if to defraud or defeat the obligation which he has thus entered into, he gives to B. any property, real or personal, over which he retains a control, or in which he reserves an interest to himself; then, in order to protect the agreement or obligation which he has entered into, and to defeat the fraud attempted upon that agreement or obligation and to prevent his escaping, as it were, from his own contract, courts of equity will treat this gift to B. in the same manner as if it were purely testamentary, and were included in a will; and the subject-matter of the gift will be brought back, and made the fund out of which to perform the obligation. At all events, it will be made the measure for calculating, and ordering the performance of, and dealing with, the claim arising under that agreement or obligation.¹

§ 787. These cases are sufficient to point out the general course of remedial justice in equity in all cases of specific performance, whether they are within or without the statute of frauds. To go over all the doctrines applicable to the subject, in all the varieties, would require a discussion wholly incompatible with the objects of this work. The principles already expounded may serve to explain the true nature and extent of the jurisdiction at present exercised; a jurisdiction which has been an appropriate theme of praise on all occasions in which the claims of courts of equity to public favor have been vindicated by their friends or assailed by their enemies.² In conclusion, it may, however, be proper to remark, that all the cases for a specific performance, which we have been examining, presuppose the contract to be between competent parties, and founded upon a valuable or meritorious con-

¹ *Logan v. Wienhold*, 7 Bligh, 53, 54. [See *Moorhouse v. Colvin*, 9 Eng. Law & Eq. 136, where a bill was brought by a husband to enforce an alleged contract to bequeath his wife the sum of £2,000, upon which expectation he married her.] [* See also *Vanduyne v. Vreeland*, 1 Beasley, Ch. 142.]

² *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 445; 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B.* 1, ch. 5, § 1, and notes (a), (e); *id.* § 2, (h); 1 *Mad. Pr. Ch.* 326, 327.

sideration; for courts of equity will not, as we have seen, and shall presently more fully see,¹ carry into specific execution any merely *nude pacts* or voluntary agreements, not founded upon some valuable or meritorious consideration; nor between parties not *sui juris* or competent to contract, as such infants and *femes covert*; ² nor (as we have already seen) any agreements which are against public policy, or are immoral, or which involve a breach of trust.³

§ 788. It may also be stated, that, in general, where the specific execution of a contract respecting lands will be decreed between the parties it will be decreed between all persons claiming under them in privity of estate, or of representation, or of title, unless other controlling equities are interposed.⁴ If a person purchases lands with knowledge of a prior contract to convey them, he is (as we have seen) affected by all the equities which affected the lands in the hands of the vendor.⁵ The lien of the vendor for the purchase-money attaches to them, and such purchaser may be compelled either to pay the purchase-money, or to surrender up the land, or to have it sold for the benefit of the vendor. In this view, the remedy of the vendor against such purchaser may be said to be *in rem*, rather than *in personam*.⁶ On the other hand, if the vendee under such a contract, conveys the same to a third person, the latter, upon paying the purchase-money, may compel the vendor, and any person claiming under him in privity, or as a purchaser with notice, to complete the contract and convey the title to him.⁷

§ 789. The general principle upon which this doctrine proceeds,

¹ *Ante*, § 433, 706, 706 a, 750, 769; *post*, § 793 a, 973, 977, 987, 1040; *Woodcock v. Bennet*, 1 Cowen, 711; *Crosbie v. McDoual*, 13 Ves. 148; *Wycherley v. Wycherley*, 2 Eden, 177.

² *Flight v. Bolland*, 4 Russ. 298, 301; *ante*, 723, 751, note.

³ 1 Mad. Pr. Ch. 328; *Brownsmith v. Gilbourne*, 2 Str. 738; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 445, 451*; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 1, § 7 (x); *Ellison v. Ellison*, 6 Ves. 656, 662; *Ex parte Pye*, 18 Ves. 149; *ante*, § 293, 294, 296, 297, 769.

⁴ See 3 Wooddes. Lect. 58, p. 468, 469, 472; *Newland on Contr. ch. 2, p. 34, &c.*; *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd. B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 448, 449*; *Champion v. Brown*, 6 Johns. Ch. 398, 402, 403; *Smith v. Hibbard*, 2 Dick. 730.

⁵ *Ante*, § 784.

⁶ *Champion v. Brown*, 6 Johns. Ch. 398, 402.

⁷ *Ibid.*; *Winged v. Lefebury*, 2 Eq. Abridg. 32, pl. 43; *Taylor v. Stibbert*, 2 Ves. Jr. 437; *Daniels v. Davison*, 16 Ves. 249; s. c. 17 Ves. 433; *ante*, § 784.

is, that from the time of the contract for the sale of the land, the vendor, as to the land, becomes a trustee for the vendee, and the vendee, as to the purchase-money, a trustee to the vendor, who has a lien upon the land therefor. And every subsequent purchaser from either, with notice, becomes subject to the same equities as the party would be from whom he purchased.¹ In cases of this sort, if the original vendee dies, after having sold the lands to a third person, who is to pay the purchase-money, his personal representatives are entitled to proceed against such purchaser in equity, to indemnify them, and to pay the purchase-money.² On the other hand, if the vendor dies, his personal representatives may enforce the lien for the purchase-money against the land in the possession of the purchaser. But, who, as between the heirs and personal representatives of the vendee or a subsequent purchaser, is to bear the charge, that is, whether it is to be borne by the personal estate or by the land purchased, is a matter properly belonging to other branches of equity jurisdiction, in which the marshalling of assets is considered.³

§ 790. There is another consideration which is incident to this subject, and to which courts of equity have given an attention and effect proportioned to its importance. In the view of courts of law, contracts respecting lands, or other things, of which a specific execution will be decreed in equity, are considered as simple executory agreements, and as not attaching to the property in any manner, as an incident, or as a present or future charge. But courts of equity regard them in a very different light. They treat them, for most purposes, precisely as if they had been specifically executed.⁴ Thus, if a man has entered into a valid contract for the purchase of land, he is treated in equity as the equitable owner of the land, and the vendor is treated as the owner of the money. The purchaser may devise it as land, even before the conveyance is made, and it passes by descent to his heir as land.⁵ The vendor is deemed in equity to stand seised of it for the benefit of the pur-

¹ *Champion v. Brown*, 6 Johns. Ch. 403; *Davie v. Beardsham*, 1 Ch. Cas. 39; *Green v. Smith*, 1 Atk. 572, 573; *Pollexfen v. Moore*, 3 Atk. 273; *Mackreth v. Symmons*, 15 Ves. 329, 336; *Walker v. Preswick*, 2 Ves. 622; *Seaman v. Van Rensselaer*, 10 Barbour, 83; *Trimmer v. Bayne*, 9 Ves. 209; *ante*, § 506.

² *Champion v. Brown*, 6 Johns. Ch. 405, 406.

³ *Ante*, § 558 to 580; *Champion v. Brown*, 6 Johns. Ch. 402.

⁴ 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 9, note (s); *ante*, § 64 g.

⁵ *Seton v. Slade*, 7 Ves. 264, 274; *post*, § 1212.

chaser;¹ and the trust (as has been already stated) attaches to the land, so as to bind the heir of the vendor, and every one claiming under him as a purchaser, with notice of the trust.² The heir of the purchaser may come into equity and insist upon a specific performance of the contract; and, unless some other circumstances affect the case, he may require the purchase-money to be paid out of the personal estate of the purchaser, in the hands of his personal representative. On the other hand, the vendor may come into equity for a specific performance of the contract on the other side, and to have the money paid; for the remedy, in cases of specific performance, is mutual,³ and the purchase-money is treated as the personal estate of the vendor, and goes as such to his personal representatives. In like manner, land, articed or devised to be sold, and turned into money, is reputed as money,⁴ and money, articed or bequeathed to be invested in land, has, in equity, many of the qualities of real estate, and is descendible and devisable as such, according to the rules of inheritance in other cases.⁵ So, if

¹ See *Seaman v. Van Rensselaer*, 10 Barbour, 86. ² *Ante*, § 788, 789.

³ *Ante*, § 723; *post*, § 796, 1212, 1214.

⁴ [See *Burr v. Sim*, 1 Wharton, 252; *Pratt v. Taliaferro*, 3 Leigh, 419; *North v. Valk*, *Dudley's Eq.* 212; *Lindsay v. Pleasants*, 4 Iredell, Eq. 321; *Wood v. Cone*, 7 Paige, 472; *Wood v. Keyes*, 8 Paige, 365.]

⁵ *Post*, § 1212 to 1215; 3 Wooddes. Lect. 58, p. 466 to 468; 1 Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 9, and notes (s), (t); *Newland on Contr.* ch. 3, p. 48 to 64; *Craig v. Leslie*, 3 Wheat. 563, 577, 578; *Fletcher v. Ashburner*, 1 Bro. Ch. 496. See 1 *Equity Leading Cases*, 534, and editor's notes. *Taylor v. Berham*, 5 How. S. C. 234; *Willing v. Peters*, 7 Barr, 287; *Doughty v. Bull*, 2 P. Will. 320; *Yates v. Compton*, 2 P. Will. 308; *Trelawney v. Booth*, 2 Atk. 307; *Rose v. Cunynghame*, 11 Ves. 554; *Kirkman v. Miles*, 13 Ves. 338. As a fit illustration of the text, Mr. Fonblanque's note (*Fonbl. Eq. B. 1, ch. 6, § 9, note (t)*), containing the principal authorities) is here inserted. "The rule," says he, "equally applies to money devised to be laid out in land. The authorities, to show that money, agreed or directed to be laid out in land, is to be considered as land, are very numerous. The force of the rule is particularly evinced by those cases in which it has been held that the money, agreed or directed to be laid out, so fully becomes land, as, 1st, not to be personal assets; *Earl of Pembroke v. Beighden*, 3 Ch. 115; 2 Vern. 52; *Lawrence v. Beverly*, 2 Keble, 841; cited also in *Kettleby v. Attwood*, 1 Vern. 298, 741; 2dly, to be subject to the courtesy of the husband, though not to the dower of the wife; *Sweetapple v. Bindon*, 2 Vern. 536; *Otway v. Hudson*, 2 Vern. 583; 3dly, to pass as land by will, if subject to the real use at the time the will was made. See ch. 4, § 2, note (n). See also *Milner v. Mills*, Mosely, 123; *Greenhill v. Greenhill*, 2 Vern. 679, *Prec. Ch.* 320; *Shorer v. Shorer*, 10 Mod. 39; *Lingen v. Sowray*, 1 P. Wms. 172; *Guidott v. Guidott*, 3 Atk. 254; 4thly, not to pass as money by

a trustee should take property with absolute directions to sell and convert it into money, there, although the directions were not carried into effect during the life of the party creating the trust, the property would be deemed personalty. But if the charge is not absolute, as if a testator should charge his real estate for the payment of his debts, it will retain its character as real estate, so far as the charge does not extend, until it is actually converted.¹ The like rule will apply to the case of real estate, conveyed to a trustee in trust, to permit a mortgagor to receive the rents and profits, and upon payment of the mortgage money to reconvey to the mortgagor, and upon default of payment to sell the premises,

a general bequest to a legatee; but it will by a particular description, as so much money to be laid out in land; *Cross v. Addenbroke*; *Fulham v. Jones*, cited in a note to *Lechmere v. Earl of Carlisle*, 3 P. Wms. 222; or by a bequest of all the testator's estate in law and equity; *Rashleigh v. Masters*, 1 Ves. Jr. 204. But equity will not consider money as land, unless the covenant or direction to lay it out in land be express; *Symons v. Rutter*, 2 Vern. 227; *Curling v. May*, M. 8, G. 2, cited in *Guidott v. Guidott*, 3 Atk. 255. And as money agreed or directed to be laid out in land shall in general be considered as land, so land agreed or directed to be sold shall be considered and treated as money; *Gilb. Lex Prætoria*, 243; but see *Ashby v. Palmer*, 1 Merivale, 296. As to from what time the conversion shall be supposed, see *Sitwell v. Bernard*, 6 Ves. 520; *Elwin v. Elwin*, 8 Ves. 547; and the creditors of the bargainor may compel the heir to convey the land; *Best v. Stanford*, 1 Salk. 154. But it must not be understood that where a testator directs his real estate to be sold for purposes which are answered out of the personal estate, the next of kin may insist upon the real estates being sold; for 'there is no equity between the next of kin and the heir; but the general principle is, that the heir takes all that which is not for a defined and specific purpose given by the will'; *Chitty v. Parker*, 2 Ves. Jr. 271; *Ex parte Bromfield*, 1 Ves. Jr. 453; *Oxenden v. Lord Compton*, 2 Ves. Jr. 69; *Walker v. Denne*, 2 Ves. Jr. 170; *Lord Compton v. Oxenden*, 2 Ves. Jr. 361; but see *Wheldale v. Partridge*, 8 Ves. 235. And where the testator was entitled to a fund, as money or land, his real and personal representatives shall take it as money or as land, according as the testator would have taken it. See *Ackroyd v. Smithson*, and the cases there cited, 1 Bro. Ch. 503; see also *Hewitt v. Wright*, 1 Bro. Ch. 86, as to Lord Thurlow's opinion, that money, resulting to the heir, as being produced by sale of real estate undisposed of, is to be considered as personal estate of the heir, and as such would go to his executor; *Russell v. Smythies*, 1 Cox, 215. But if the use and possession were not united it would still be considered as land; *Rashleigh v. Masters*, 1 Ves. Jr. 201; *Wheldale v. Partridge*, 8 Ves. 235." The same subject is most amply discussed by Mr. Newland, with uncommon care, in his treatise on Contracts, ch. 3, p. 48 to 64. See also *Jeremy on Eq. Jurisd.* B. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 1, p. 446, 447; *Craig v. Leslie*, 3 Wheat. 577; 2 Fonbl. on Eq. B. 1, ch. 4, § 2, note (n).

¹ *Bourne v. Bourne*, 2 Hare, 38; *Dalzell on the Law of Conversion*, 89.

and pay over the residue to the mortgagor, after payment of the mortgage; there, if no sale should be made until after the death of the mortgagor, it will pass by his devise to his devisee, or to his heir, as real estate, and not as personalty.¹

§ 791. The ground of this latter doctrine is, that courts of equity will regard the substance, and not the mere form, of agreements and other instruments; and will give them the precise effect which the parties intended, in furtherance of that intention. It is presumed that the parties, in directing money to be invested in land, or land to be turned into money, intend that the property shall assume the very character of the property into which it is to be converted; whatever may be the manner in which that direction is given. And no one will deny that it is competent, at least in a court of equity, for the owner of the fund to make land money, or money land, at his sole will and pleasure.²

§ 792. But, although these are the general principles adopted by courts of equity, yet they are not without limitations and qualifications,³ standing upon peculiar reasons, but still consistent with those principles. Thus (as we have seen), nothing is looked upon, in equity, as done, but what ought to be done; not what might have been done.⁴ Nor will equity consider things as thus done in favor of everybody; but only in favor of those who have a right to pray that they might be done.⁵

§ 793. Upon the ground of intention, also, if it can be collected from any present or subsequent acts of the parties, that it is their intention, notwithstanding any will, or deed, or other instrument, that the property shall retain its present character, either in whole or in part, courts of equity will act upon that intention.⁶ Thus, for instance, if money is directed by will, or other instrument, to be laid out in land, or land is directed to be turned into money, the party entitled to the beneficial interest may in either case, if he elects so to do, prevent any conversion of the property from its

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.; *post*, § 1212 to 1214.

³ See *North v. Valk*, *Dudley's Eq.* 212.

⁴ *Ante*, § 64 *g*, 790.

⁵ 1 *Fonbl. Eq. B. 1*, ch. 6, § 9, and note (*s*); *ante*, § 664 *g*; *Craig v. Leslie*, 8 *Wheat.* 577, 578.

⁶ See Mr. Cox's note to *Cruse v. Barley*, 3 *P. Will.* 22 (1); *Craig v. Leslie*, 8 *Wheat.* 577 to 585; *Newby v. Skinner*, 1 *Dev. & Bat. Eq.* 488; *post*, § 1212 to 1215, 1250; *Shadforth v. Temple*, 10 *Simons*, 184.

was reversed. In this case the estate constituting the settlement was the remainder after the termination of a life-estate in lands of one-eighth part owned in common, and which had been conveyed to trustees, for the wife during life, with remainder to the husband for life, with remainder to the children in tail, and remainder to the heirs of the wife; and a power of sale and exchange was given to the trustees, who were to invest the proceeds in the purchase of realty, in possession, and hold it on the trusts declared. The entirety of a portion of the estate was sold, and an eighth part of the purchase-money apportioned according to the value of the life-estate and reversion respectively, and the value of the reversionary interest paid to the trustees of the settlement, or so expressed. In point of fact, however, the whole eighth part was invested in consols, and the dividends paid to the tenant for life. This state of things continued during the life of the wife, who died without issue, and during the life of the husband and heir-at-law, successively. But there was no evidence of their intention, as to the destination of the fund, except what might be inferred from the course of dealing with it. That, in the opinion of the Vice Chancellor, justified the inference of an election to treat the fund as properly converted into personalty. But the Court of Chancery Appeal held, that an election could not be inferred to take the property in its actual state, and that on the death of the heir-at-law his part of the fund was to be treated as part of his real estate; and that it did not pass under a devise of all such shares as he might at his death possess in the estate, there being a part of it still remaining unsold to answer the description.]

§ 793 b. We have already had occasion to remark, throughout the whole of the discussion, respecting Bills for specific performance of contracts, that it has been constantly supposed that the contract was one founded upon a valuable consideration in the contemplation of law.¹ In respect to voluntary contracts, or such as are not founded in a valuable consideration, we have already had occasion to state, that courts of equity do not interfere to enforce them, either as against the party himself or as against other volunteers claiming under him.² Thus, for example, if a party should enter into a vol-

¹ *Ante*, § 787.

² *Ante*, § 493, note (1), § 706, 706 a, 787; 1 Fonbl. on Equity, B. 1, ch. 5, § 2, note (A), § 3; *Tate v. Hilbert*, 2 Ves. Jr. 112; *Jefferys v. Jefferys*, 1 Craig & Phillips, 136, 141; *Meek v. Kettlewell*, 1 Phillips, Ch. 342.

untary agreement to transfer stock to another, or to give him a sum of money, or to convey to him certain real estate, courts of equity would not assist in enforcing the agreement, either against the party entering into the agreement, or against his personal representatives; for the party contracted with is a mere volunteer.¹ The same rule is applied to imperfect gifts, not testamentary, *inter vivos*, to imperfect voluntary assignments of debts and other property, to voluntary executory trusts, and to voluntary defective conveyances.² A few cases may serve to illustrate this doctrine. Thus, where a parent has assigned certain scrip to his daughter by a written assignment, which operated as an equitable assignment only, and not as a legal transfer, a court of equity refused to compel the donor or his executors to perfect the gift.³ So, where a lady, by a writing, assigned a bond of a third person to her niece, and delivered the bond to the latter, and then died, a court of equity refused to enforce the assignment against the executor, or to decree payment of the money by the obligor to the niece.⁴ So, where a testatrix drew a check on her bankers for £150, in favor of A., and verbally directed A. to apply that sum, or so much of it as might be necessary, to make up to a legatee the difference in value between a legacy of £100 which she had by her will given to the legatee, and the price of a £100 share in a certain railway; the testatrix informing A. that she intended to give the share instead of the legacy, but she did not think it necessary to alter her will; and the bankers gave credit to A. for the £150: in a suit for the administration of the testatrix's estate, it was held, that there was no trust created for the benefit of the legatee in respect to the £150, as it could not be inferred from the facts that

¹ *Ex parte Pye*, 18 Ves. 149; *Bunn v. Winthrop*, 1 Johns. Ch. 336, 337, 338; *Pulvertoft v. Pulvertoft*, 18 Ves. 98, 99; *Antrobus v. Smith*, 12 Ves. 39, 45, 46; *Ellison v. Ellison*, 6 Ves. 662; *Edwards v. Jones*, 1 Mylne & Craig, 226, 237; *Duffield v. Elwes*, 1 Bligh, n. s. 529, 530, 531; *Colman v. Sarel*, 3 Bro. Ch. 12; s. c. 1 Ves. Jr. 50, 56; *Jefferys v. Jefferys*, 1 Craig & Phillips, 138, 141; *post*, § 793 b.

² *Ellison v. Ellison*, 6 Ves. 662; *Ex parte Pye*, 18 Ves. 149; *Bunn v. Winthrop*, 1 Johns. Ch. 336, 337, 338; *Edwards v. Jones*, 1 Mylne & Craig, 226, 227; s. c. 7 Simons, 325; *Tufnell v. Constable*, 8 Simons, 69, 70; *ante*, § 433, note 1, 706 a; 1 Fonbl. on Equity, B. 1, ch. 5, § 2, and note (h); *Callaghan v. Callaghan*, 8 Clark & Finnel. 394, 401; *Dillon v. Coppin*, 4 Mylne & Craig, 647, 670, 671; *Antrobus v. Smith*, 12 Ves. 39.

³ *Antrobus v. Smith*, 12 Ves. 39, 43; *ante*, § 433 and note.

⁴ *Edwards v. Jones*, 1 Mylne & Craig, 226; s. c. 7 Simons, 325; *ante*, § 433 and note.

the testatrix meant to place this disposition of the £150 out of her own control in her lifetime. It was, therefore, not an absolute perfected gift.¹ [So, where a husband executed a document which was attested by two witnesses, giving to his wife a freehold house in which they resided, but afterwards died without making a will, and the heir-at-law recovered a verdict for the possession of the house against the wife, it was held, that the gift to her was incomplete, and a bill asking that the heir-at-law might be declared a trustee of the wife was dismissed.²] So, where a testator, to whom

¹ *Hughes v. Stubbs*, 1 Hare, 476. In this case, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Wigram said: "The question is, whether the testatrix has so dealt with the sum of £150 in question, as to make it no longer her property but the property of Mrs. Gelding (the legatee). If a person intending to give property to another vests that property in trustees, and declares a trust upon it in favor of the object of his bounty there are cases which establish that, by such acts, the gift is perfected, and the author of the trust loses all dominion over it (*Colman v. Sarel*, 3 Bro. C. C. 12; s. c. 1 Ves. Jr. 50; *Ellison v. Ellison*, 6 Ves. 656; *Pulvertoft v. Pulvertoft*, 18 Ves. 84; *Ex parte Pye*, *Ex parte Dubost*, 18 Ves. 140). See *Price v. Price*, 8 Eng. Law & Eq. 271. The principle has been extended to cases in which the author of the gift has had the legal dominion over the property remaining in him, but has completely declared himself to be a trustee of that property for the object indicated; *Ex parte Pye*, *Ex parte Dubost*. But it is clear, also, that a person not intending to give or to part with the dominion over his property, may retain such dominion, notwithstanding he may have vested the property in trustees, and have declared a trust upon it in favor of third persons (*Walwyn v. Coutts*, 3 Sim. 14; *Garrard v. Lord Lauderdale*, 3 Sim. 1; s. c. 2 R. & M. 451; *Acton v. Woodgate*, 2 Myl. & K. 492; *Gaskell v. Gaskell*, 2 Younge & J. 502). The different effects thus given by courts of equity to transactions similar in form, necessarily give rise, in some cases, to questions of considerable difficulty. But the distinction which has been taken between the two classes of cases is founded in reason and good sense, and however refined that distinction may in some instances appear, I do not entertain a doubt but that courts of equity will continue to maintain it. "The distinction" (as Lord Cottenham observed, in *Bill v. Cureton*, 2 Myl. & K. 511, speaking of trusts for the payment of debts) "is adopted to promote the views and intentions of the parties. A man who, without communication with his creditors, puts property into the hands of trustees for the purpose of paying his debts, proposes only a benefit to himself by the payment of his debts; his object is not to benefit his creditors. It would, therefore, be a result most remote from the contemplation of the debtor, if it should be held that any creditor, discovering the transaction, should be able to fasten upon the property and invest himself with the character of a *cestui que trust*. The result of the cases is, that the court looks into the nature of the transaction, and determines from the nature of the transaction what the effect of it shall be in divesting the owner of the property to which it relates."

² *Price v. Price*, 8 Eng. Law & Eq. 271.

[* § 793 c. In a late case¹ the subject of voluntary assignments is examined with considerable carefulness, by a very eminent equity judge, Vice-Chancellor Wood, and the conclusion arrived at, that a voluntary assignment, by deed, of the assignor's interest in stocks standing in the names of trustees, upon trust for him, is a complete transfer of such interest, as between the donee and the representatives of the donor, although no notice of the deed was given to the trustees, in the donor's lifetime; because no further act, on the part of the donor, was requisite to complete the gift. And it was said the donee could compel the trustees to transfer the stock to him, without making the donor or his representatives parties to the suit. But if the trustees, before notice of the deed, transferred the stock to another person, the donee would have no remedy against them. The case is put upon the ground that the title to the property had passed, by the deed, so far as the donor, or his representatives, were concerned. And it is conceded, that where there is a contract only, or an imperfect gift, which requires some other act on the part of the assignor or donor, the court will not interfere to compel the performance of such act. The cases upon this subject are very thoroughly and ably reviewed in the case of *Kekewich v. Manning*;² and *Beatson v. Beatson*,³ and *Dillon v. Coppin*,⁴ are there

that a declaration by parol is sufficient to create a trust of personal property; and that if the testator, *Thomas Warry*, had, in his lifetime, declared himself a trustee of the debt for the plaintiff, that, in equity, would perfect the gift to the plaintiff as against *Thomas Warry* and his estate. The distinctions upon this subject are undoubtedly refined, but it does not appear to me that there is any substantial difference between such a case and the present. The testator, in directing *Jenkins* to hold the money in trust for the plaintiff, which was assented to and acted upon by *Jenkins*, impressed, I think, a trust upon the money, which was complete and irrevocable. It was equivalent to a declaration by the testator that the debt was a trust for the plaintiff. The transaction bears no resemblance to an undertaking or agreement to assign. It was in terms a trust, and the aid of the court was not necessary to complete it.

¹ [* *Donaldson v. Donaldson*, Kay, 711.

² 1 De Gex, M. & G. 176. The learned judge, the Lord-Justice Knight Bruce, among others, refers to *Wheatley v. Purr*, 1 Keen, 551; *Blakely v. Brady*, 2 Dr. & Walsh, 316, as confirming his own opinion. He also referred to the following, among others, as possibly in conflict with his lordship's decision. *Godsal v. Webb*, 2 Keen, 99; *James v. Bydder*, 4 Beavan, 600; *Bayley v. Boulcott*, 4 Russell, 345.

³ 12 Simons, 281.

⁴ 4 My. & Cr. 647.]

tion, drawn between cases of voluntary contracts, covenants, and settlements, where there has been a defective conveyance or execution thereof, and cases of a defective execution of a power. In the latter cases, the donee of the power designs to carry into effect not merely his own objects and interests, but those of other persons, by executing the power in favor of persons who stand as volunteers, upon a meritorious consideration, and for whom he is under a natural and moral obligation to provide; and his own defective execution of the power by mistake, or otherwise, not only defeats his own positive intention and moral obligation and duty to execute the trust reposed in him, but it would, if not aided, also defeat the very objects for which the power was created by third persons, whether it was created as a bounty, or upon a valuable consideration passing between the donor and donee of the power.¹ Another exception, having a firmer foundation, is of cases of donations *mortis causâ*, as contradistinguished from donations *inter vivos*, in which, although the donation is imperfect, as a complete transfer of the right of property, yet, in equity, it will be upheld, in order to effectuate the intention of the donor, and enforced against his executors, as it is treated as in the nature of a testamentary act. But of this, sufficient has been already said, in another place.²

[* § 793 e. The subject of the specific performance of contracts in courts of equity covers a large space, and it will not be important to give the points decided since the last edition much in detail, since the cases more commonly turn upon some slight distinction, depending upon matter of fact, and are not much guide for the decision of other cases not precisely similar. The following points may be noted as occurring in recent cases.

793 f. Where the principal agreement cannot be enforced, for any reason, the court will not, ordinarily, decree specific performance of an accessory agreement.³

§ 793 g. Where the contract is constituted by a proposal on one side and an acceptance on the other, the court will not decree

8 Simons, 325. See *post*, § 1377 a, 1415; *ante*, § 793 a; Callaghan v. Callaghan, 8 Clarke & Fin. 374, 401; Dillon v. Coppin, 4 Mylne & Craig, 647, 670, 671.

¹ See *ante*, § 169, 170, and note.

² *Ante*, § 433, note; § 607 a, note; 607 b, note.

³ [* Scottish Northeastern Railway Co. v. Stewart, 3 Macqu. H. Lds. Cas. 382.

specific performance, unless the acceptance is unqualified and unconditional.¹

§ 793 *h*. Where there is any matter affecting the contract, about which the party might *bonâ fide* make a mistake, and he swears positively that he did make such mistake, a court of equity will not decree specific performance against him.²

§ 793 *i*. In regard to the specific performance of contracts for the lease of premises, it has been held, that where the premises were hired for a particular use, for which a license failed to be procured, without the party's fault, he would not be decreed to accept the lease.³ The lessee cannot require specific performance of a parol contract to grant a lease on more ample terms than those stipulated in the written contract.⁴ And where on a bill for specific performance of a contract to grant a farming lease, the evidences left it doubtful whether the lessee had been guilty of any such breaches of covenant as would have worked a forfeiture of the lease, if it had been granted, the court will direct the lease to be antedated, so as to enable the defendant to try the question at law.⁵

§ 793 *k*. The court will not compel specific performance of a contract by a company to employ the plaintiff as their broker, or enjoin such company from publishing an advertisement announcing another person as their broker.⁶

§ 793 *l*. The courts will not decree specific performance of a contract which will have the effect to infringe the prior rights of other parties;⁷ nor for the execution of a lease where it is impossible to determine to whom the ground rent is payable.⁸ But one cannot excuse himself from specific performance by paying the amount of stipulated damages named in the contract.⁹ And

¹ *Oriental In. Steam Co. v. Briggs*, 5 Law T. N. s. 477; s. c. 2 Johns. & H. 625; s. c. 8 Jur. N. s. 201.

² *Swaissland v. Dearsley*, 7 Jur. N. s. 984; s. c. 29 Beav. 430; *Day v. Wells*, 30 id. 220.

³ *Modlen v. Snowball*, 7 Jur. N. s. 1260.

⁴ *Londonderry v. Baker*, 3 Law T. N. s. 546.

⁵ *Rankin v. Lay*, 2 De G., F. & J. 65. See also, upon the general question, *Clowes v. Garraway*, 7 Law T. N. s. 243.

⁶ *Brett v. East India & L. Shipping Co.*, 10 L. T. N. s. 187; s. c. 2 H. & M. 404.

⁷ *Reed v. Don Pedro &c. Gold Mining Co.*, 10 Law T. N. s. 836.

⁸ *Pegler v. White*, 33 Beav. 403.

⁹ *Long v. Bowring*, 33 Beav. 585; s. c. 10 Jur. N. s. 668.

vagueness of the terms of the contract, or where it involves the performance of personal services, or where there is any want of mutuality, or the position of the parties has become materially changed, are all considerations urging against decreeing specific performance.¹

§ 793 *m*. Although the courts of equity do not in general decree specific performance of merely executory agreements and especially where they cannot superintend the performance of the contract on both parts, they will, nevertheless, enforce family settlements. It was accordingly held in a recent case, where a father had conveyed his entire estate to his children upon their stipulating the support of their parents, that a specific performance should be decreed.²

§ 793 *n*. It is not competent for the plaintiff in a bill for specific performance to join as defendants both the agent and his principal in entering into the contract, and pray alternative relief against the one or the other as the court shall be of opinion equity justifies a decree. Thus where a contract had been entered into by a firm of solicitors, acting on behalf of their client to pay the plaintiff certain sums of money, and he filed his bill against the client and the solicitors, alleging that the client was bound by the contract, but that he denied that he was so bound on the ground that the solicitors had no authority to enter into such contract; and the bill prayed specific performance by the client, or otherwise, if it should appear that the solicitors were not authorized, then that the solicitors themselves might be declared personally liable to perform the same; a demurrer to the bill by the solicitors was allowed on the ground that the plaintiff himself did not allege that the client was not bound, and also on the ground that alternative relief could not be prayed in such case.³

§ 793 *o*. In one case⁴ where the plaintiff had purchased an estate with a view to set aside a fraudulent contract in regard to the property made with the vendor, the court declined to grant relief upon the ground that the contract was in the nature of champerty or maintenance. And it was here very justly considered that the

¹ *Firth v. Ridley*, 33 Beav. 516; *European & Am. Sub. Tel. Co. v. Elliott*, 12 Law T. N. S. 416.

² *Chubb v. Peckham*, 2 Beasley, 207.

³ *Clark v. Lord Rivers*, Law Rep. 5 Eq. 91.

⁴ *De Hoghton v. Money*, Law Rep. 2 Ch. App. 164.

§ 793 r. The late decisions do not vary essentially from the rules in regard to specific performance already declared in the preceding sections. Courts of equity will decree specific performance of a contract of compromise in regard to claims under a will without inquiring into the nature or adequacy of the considerations leading to the contract. The contract being a friendly compromise of a family controversy, and in its nature tending to maintain the peace and harmony of families, is one entitled to the most favorable consideration of courts of equity.¹ A purchaser must have a good title, and cannot be compelled to accept one which exposes him to litigation.² The cases where part performance has been held to take the case out of the operation of the statute of frauds, are very numerous; but they all agree that something more is required than the payment of the price. Possession must be taken by the vendee at least, and the case is rendered unquestionable by his making substantial improvements.³ But courts will not decree specific performance of contracts against good policy, or enforce an agreement to change the board of directors of a railway company in consideration of the payment of money.⁴ Nor will the courts of equity decree specific performance of a contract by the *cestui que trust* to convey his interest in a trust estate.⁵ Awards in regard to disputed boundaries will be decreed to be specifically performed.⁶

¹ Bigelow, J., in *Leach v. Fobes*, 11 Gray, 506, 509. See *Whitney v. Stone*, 23 Calf. 275.

² *Speakman v. Forepaugh*, 44 Penn. St. 363. But it will be sufficient to entitle the party to a specific performance if the vendor can give a good title any time before the decree. *Lockett v. Williamson*, 37 Mo. 388; *Hume v. Pocock*, Law Rep. 1 Ch. App. 379. But if the contract define the person from whom title is to be given, and that be produced, the court will decree specific performance, and not allow the title to be impeached. *Ib.*

³ *Traphagen v. Traphagen*, 40 Barb. 537; *Bennett v. Abrams*, 41 id. 619; *Whitridge v. Parkhurst*, 20 Md. 62; *Neatherly v. Ripley*, 21 Texas, 434.

⁴ *Fremont v. Stone*, 42 Barb. 169. Nor will the court purge the contract of its illegality, and then enforce it, as by enforcing a contract which stipulates usurious interest above the rate allowed by law. *Farwell v. Meyer*, 35 Ill. 40. But one cannot defend a suit for specific performance on the ground that he obtained his title to the land in question by contracts against sound policy, provided the other party to the contract claimed to be specifically performed, did not participate in such illegal contracts. *Pingree v. Coffin*, 12 Gray, 288. See also *Smith v. Johnson*, 37 Ala. 633.

⁵ *Shankland's Appeal*, 47 Penn. St. 113.

⁶ *Thompson v. Deans*, 6 Jones, Eq. 22.

titled to receive interest thereon upon a decree of specific performance, unless it appears that the purchaser has made use of the money, or in some way received interest thereon, nor will the party be entitled to claim payment upon such a contract in coin.¹

§ 793 u. The court will not refuse to grant a decree of specific performance against the seller of land on account of the depreciation of the stocks in which he agreed to accept the price, at par, relying on the purchaser's representation that the stocks were worth that, although in fact they had no market-value at the time, having sold two months before at ninety-five cents on the dollar of the par value, and two months after the contract it was first known to the directors of the company and one month later to the public, that the shares were in fact worth only ten cents on the dollar of par value, there being no proof of any fraudulent purpose on the part of the purchaser of the land in so representing the value of the shares.² But it seems to us that the case scarcely comes within the rule that courts of equity will not decree specific performance of contracts which, although valid at law, operate unequally and unjustly between the parties. In other words, the courts of equity have commonly refused to decree the specific performance of a contract to convey land, where the parties have acted under any misapprehension of material facts either as to the value of the land or the price paid for it. And in the present case, by the decree of the court, the defendant was compelled to part with his land without any just equivalent. The principle of the case would have been the same if the stocks had been entirely valueless. The true doctrine upon this point is that declared in a late case³ that where the defendant shows, to the satisfaction of the court, that he entered into the contract under a *bonâ fide* misapprehension in a material point, a specific performance will not be decreed.

§ 793 v. Courts of equity exercise a discretion in regard to decreeing specific performance, and where the title to any portion of the estate fails, or is not of a marketable character, it will not be forced upon the purchaser.⁴ And where any of the facts requisite to determine the location or quantity of land require the concurrence of both the parties in order to be settled, the court will not

¹ *Davis v. Parker*, 14 Allen, 94.

² *Powers v. Mayo*, 97 Mass. 180.

³ *Cuff v. Dorland*, 50 Barb. 438. See also *post*, § 793 (v), and cases cited.

⁴ *Freetly v. Barnhart*, 51 Penn. St. 279.





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